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EXPLORING PARK SUPPORT:  
A STUDY OF PHILANTHROPY AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR YELLOWSTONE  
NATIONAL PARK

By

GEOFFREY GILBERT HAVENS

B.S., Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri, 2014

Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Master of Science  
in Recreation Management

The University of Montana  
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Exploring Support: A Study of Philanthropic and Other Support for Yellowstone National Park

Chairperson: Norma P. Nickerson

Support for charitable causes has long been a topic studied in the hopes of uncovering the reasons for donations and other support behaviors. However, holistic examination of support for places, such as parks, has been relatively untouched as an area of research. One such place where understanding such support is important is Yellowstone National Park, the first designated National Park and one of the most visited parks in the United States. A lack in adequate government funding to meet increasingly heavy visitation has led the park to increasingly rely on outside support for the park.

The purpose of this study was to uncover the ways that several different supporter demographics provided support to Yellowstone and the reasons they provided this support. Participants were drawn from non-donor repeat visitors to the park, Yellowstone Association (YA) members, and Yellowstone Park Foundation (YPF) donors. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were utilized to reveal rich descriptions of these concepts in the supporters own words. Interviews included queries about visitation behaviors, participant definition of park support, donation or visitation specific queries tailored to participant groups, and a list of previously established support behaviors. Participants were recruited both in the park and by phone from a list provided by the YA and FPG and invited to participate in an interview at a later time.

In total, 28 interviews were conducted, ten each from participants who identified themselves as repeat visitors and Association members and eight donors from the Foundation. Study results show that sharing park experiences, bringing newcomers to Yellowstone, and making monetary donations were the three most prominent ways that the participants supported the park. Moreover, personal values that matched park interests, altruism, and tangible benefits derived from giving were the most commonly given explanations for providing the varied forms of support. Repeat visitors were least likely to be aware of Yellowstone's need for monetary support, and showed no altruistic giving tendencies. Because of this, one recommendation for park and non-profit managers is to better highlight the park's need to this group. Managers could also pursue interactive ways to further engage these repeat visitors such that non-monetary support is more effectively leveraged for the future.

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	iv
Tables and Figures .....	vi
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Purpose: .....	3
Purpose Statement .....	4
Research Questions: .....	4
Thesis Outline.....	6
Chapter Two: Literature Review .....	7
Introduction .....	7
Introduction to Philanthropy .....	7
An Overview of Philanthropy in Parks .....	9
Philanthropy and Research .....	11
Eight Mechanisms of Giving.....	12
Awareness of Need .....	12
Solicitation .....	13
Cost and Benefits .....	14
Altruism.....	16
Psychological Benefits.....	17
Reputation .....	20
Values.....	22
Efficacy .....	23
Philanthropy and the National Parks .....	24
Donation Boxes and Social Norms. ....	24
Non-Profits and Parks .....	26
Drawbacks to Non-profit Partners .....	27
Repeat Visitors and Park Support .....	28
Pro-Environmental Behaviors .....	28
Pro-Environmental Behaviors and Place Attachment.....	31
Place Attachment and Repeat Visitors .....	32
Conclusion/Summary .....	33
Chapter Three: Design and Methods .....	36
Introduction .....	36

Overview .....	36
Study Area .....	36
Participant Selection and Sample Framework .....	38
Research Instrument .....	40
Analysis .....	42
Limitations .....	43
Chapter Four: Results .....	45
Introduction .....	45
Demographics .....	47
A Guide to Park Support .....	48
Dimension One: Types of Park Support .....	50
Acknowledged Support .....	52
Unrecognized Support .....	56
Dimension Two: Reasons for Support .....	62
Identified Reasons for Acknowledged Support .....	62
Identified Reasons for Unrecognized Support .....	70
Additional Influences on Support: Positive and Negative .....	71
Topics that Could Aid Support .....	73
Place Attachment .....	73
Personal Interests .....	76
Topics that Could Harm Support .....	79
Other Supported Causes .....	84
Types of Causes .....	84
Reasons for Supporting Other Causes .....	87
Comparisons and Summary .....	91
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications .....	94
Conclusions .....	94
R1: <i>How do Yellowstone Park Foundation donors, Yellowstone Association members, and repeat visitors support Yellowstone National Park?</i> .....	96
R2: <i>Why do Yellowstone Park Foundation donors, Yellowstone Association members, and repeat visitors support Yellowstone National Park?</i> .....	101
R3: <i>What other types of organizations or causes do Yellowstone supporters donate to and how similar or different are these to supporting a national park?</i> .....	104

<i>R4: What are the differences and similarities in the three groups in park support rational and reasons for beginning that support?</i> .....	106
Additional Influences on Support: Positive and Negative .....	108
Research Implications .....	111
Management Implications .....	113
Future Research .....	116
Closing Remarks .....	117
References .....	119
Appendix A: Interview Guide .....	126
Appendix B: Longer Quotes about Supporting Other Non-Profit Causes.....	130
Appendix C: Participant Summaries.....	134
Repeat Visitors .....	134
Yellowstone Association .....	139
Yellowstone Park Foundation .....	145

## Tables and Figures

Table 1: Types of Support taken by YA, YPF, and RV .....	511
Table 2: Identified Reasons for Support .....	63
Table 3: Other Causes Supported by Park Supporters .....	85
Table 4: Reasons for Other Cause Support .....	88
Table 5: Comparison of Participants .....	93
Figure 1: Reasons for Acknowledged Park Support .....	49
Figure 2: Reasons for Unrecognized Park Support.....	50
Figure 3: Additional Influences on Support: Positive and Negative .....	72
Figure 4: Proposed Model of Park Support .....	96
Figure 5: Proposed Model of Park Support Progression .....	113

“Most giving is 80% emotion and 20% rational. And the best way to get to someone’s emotions is to tell a story.”

—Unknown

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

In 2015 the National Park Service (NPS) reported over four million visits to Yellowstone National Park, an all-time high for the park (NPS 2015). The first national park in the United States and often considered the flagship of the NPS, Yellowstone was created and is managed to, “Preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.” Visitors to the park enter an environment where they are merely visitors, and the landscape is (largely) as it was hundreds of years ago. Wildlife and geyser watching, hikes, visitor centers, fishing, sight-seeing, and more all contribute to Yellowstone’s goal of providing transformative experiences that both educate visitors about past and present, and provide inspiration as well.

To meet these aims, Yellowstone receives millions of dollars each year in federal funding to carry out that mission. Funding levels vary from year to year and consist of several different sources added together. The ‘base’ level of park funding originates from the federal appropriations (tax) budget. This funding is largely insufficient to provide for the operations, projects, and maintenance required by the park so other funding for the park is utilized. Frequently, extra funds are provided by additional project based federal funding for a given year, reimbursable fees (concessionaire contracts, community partnerships, etc.), and revenue generated by the park. Funding from the combined sources in 2014 gave the park a total budget of \$35 million (NPS 2015).

In the past several decades government financial actions have seen budgets across the NPS slashed, resulting in funding deficiencies despite the multi-source budget. One example, the “sequester” of (2012) saw YNP take a five percent decrease in budget across all operating areas. This resulted in later opening dates of park entrances, fewer seasonal ranger staff, and other



detrimental effects. As a result of the sequester and a federal appropriations budget that has been decreasing over the past decade, park managers have begun to explore alternative funding methods. One particular funding source of interest is that of donations. Donations to the NPS and Yellowstone in particular take several different forms and total in the millions of dollars each year (YPF 2014). Private donations collected by the NPS in parks, corporate partnerships, and partnerships with non-profit organizations are utilized to provide managers with additional funding for operations and projects. With an increased reliance on donations as a funding vehicle, understanding those who donate to causes such as a park non-profit takes on a greater importance.

Why people give has been a question studied in the philanthropic field for some time, and continues to be a topic of great importance today. A wide field of literature on reasons for giving exists and studies have examined many different theories of giving, with particular emphasis given to large philanthropic causes such as blood donation (Bekkers 2006, Alessandrini 2007), education (Weerts 2007, Holmes 2009, ), and religious organizations (Zaleski 2006, Gruber 2004). Within the field of recreation, little work as of yet has examined reasons for charitable support, particularly in the context of national parks. In the broader realm of recreation areas, some work has been conducted on donation behavior, changing variables in donation settings and observing the results (Loftin, 2007, Alpizar et. al. 2008, Alpizar, Martinsson, and Norden (2014). This research could be applied to examine the NPS donation boxes located in many visitor centers in parks nationwide. Due to its nature, it excludes examination of contributors to non-profit park partners. These partner organizations can provide millions of dollars annually to a park, and provide significant portions of a park's budget.

In studying these non-profit park partners, there has been extensive work done to describe

and define the various organizations that support recreation areas such as national parks (Wall, 2014, Vaughn and Cortner, 2014, Fortwangler, 2007, Brecher and Wise 2008). In contrast to this expanse of work, very little has been done to examine why members and donors of those organizations provide the support that they do. Furthermore, the past research conducted on park support paid little attention to another group of park-supporters, the non-donors. Of the millions of visitors to national parks such as Yellowstone each year, a large proportion of that visitation consists of repeat visitors. This group, even though not directly contributing to non-profits or the NPS, provides support to the parks in other ways. Dollars spent in the gateway communities around parks, entrance and other park fees, and bringing new visitors to places such as Yellowstone all help benefit the park, if more indirectly than donations.

Jorgensen and Nickerson (2014) examined these three groups of park supporters in their work on understanding levels of park support provided by visitors to YNP. The authors found that while most visitors surveyed had a medium level of support for the park, those who belonged to one of the two park non-profits had greater levels of support, with those who gave to both partners exhibiting the highest levels of support. Additionally, the authors stated that those visitors who participated in more engaging activities within the park were more likely to provide support for the park, either directly through donations or indirectly through alternative means of support.

**Purpose:**

Based on the groups of supporters categorized by Jorgensen and Nickerson (2014) and additional conversations with Yellowstone park officials, this study examined supporters of the two non-profits partnered with Yellowstone National Park, as well as frequent visitors to the park not affiliated with the two non-profits, in an attempt to better understand how and why people

provide support. For this project, park support was defined as direct or indirect actions taken by people that assist in the preservation and livelihood of the ecological and social functions of national parks (Jorgenson and Nickerson, 2014).

The two organizations (Yellowstone Association and the Yellowstone Park Foundation) provide many opportunities for visitors to support numerous park projects and causes closely related to the mission of the NPS. Furthermore, perks and benefits are available to those who choose to support the non-profits (and thus the park). Both have online and mailing campaigns to further attract supporters, and recruitment campaigns that rely on distinctly different strategies to gain supporters. Examining repeat visitors to Yellowstone who have visited the park at least five times has provided additional understanding of non-donation support provided to the park. To examine these supporters of YNP, a qualitative approach has been used to provide an in-depth exploration of a representative sample from each of the three groups of supporters under examination. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were utilized to gain a rich description of visitor's reasons for support, and allowed detailed pictures of support to emerge.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons and mechanisms that lead to park support by donors, association members, and repeat visitors to Yellowstone National Park. This representative group was examined to uncover the reasons people support a specific National Park and the potential differences between the groups.

### **Research Questions:**

The research questions to address the purpose of this study are as follows:

- How and why do Yellowstone Park Foundation donors and Yellowstone Association members support Yellowstone National Park?

- What ways do repeat visitors to Yellowstone see themselves supporting Yellowstone National Park and why do they provide that support?
- What other types of organizations or causes do Yellowstone supporters donate to and how similar or different are these to supporting a national park?
- What are the differences and similarities in the three groups in park support rational and reasons for beginning that support?

The first research question was the primary goal of this project and will comprise most of the data collection done for the study. Insights gained from these supporters will give park managers a better understanding of their current base of monetary support and why that support is provided. Additionally, this information will allow for the development of future management strategies by Yellowstone staff to provide additional ‘support-garnering’ experiences to further grow their support base.

The second research question sought to understand ideas of support that repeat visitors to Yellowstone have and what drives them to provide that support. This information will reveal motivations of those who have visited the park multiple times, but have not financially given to the park’s partnering non-profits. Understanding how these visitors define and provide support will give managers a better understanding of this second group of supporters and the role they play in helping the park.

The third research question sought to better understand Yellowstone supporters in a broader philanthropic context. Understanding what other causes supporters give to allows Yellowstone supporters to be placed in a broader community of giving and contributes towards a better understanding of park supporters in general.

The fourth and final research question explored the similarities and differences between the three groups of the Yellowstone supporters under examination. Being able to compare and contrast the groups will allow managers to understand the complexities of visitor support for Yellowstone. Understanding these complexities will enable planners to adopt strategies that best attract additional supporters of multiple types to further strengthen Yellowstone's support base.

### **Thesis Outline**

The second chapter of this thesis provides a background in past philanthropic literature, and examines several different explanations for giving. Focus is then turned more directly to past work conducted on philanthropy in the recreation and leisure field specifically, with what few studies exist on support for the national parks being highlighted. The third chapter examines the conceptual framework underlying this research project and presents the methodology utilized for the research. The specifics of the study area, non-profit partners, rationale and selection of the study sample, and construction of the interview guide are reviewed therein.

Chapter four presents the results of the data analysis from the interviews conducted in the study, and highlights key themes that emerged from the data. Chapter five discusses the conclusions drawn from this data and offers management implications and suggestions for future research for the field of philanthropy within the national parks.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The literature review for this park support study was separated into several broad sections to help define the topics examined as part of the project. First a broad introduction to the philanthropic field and the challenges faced in studying park support was undertaken as a primer to the subject area. Then, past work on theories of philanthropic giving were examined under a framework of eight different mechanisms to provide an overview of past work on why people financially support causes at large. Next, an examination of philanthropic research that has been conducted within the setting of national parks was conducted and the types of non-profit organizations being examined are introduced to illustrate what is known in the specific research area. Finally the subject of indirect support, or pro-environmental behaviors was examined in the contexts of place attachment and repeat visitation to locations.

### **Introduction to Philanthropy**

The term philanthropy reaches back centuries in history. Sulek (2010) traced how the term has been defined and altered over history, and noted that defining the term properly has been a challenge for scholars. Reviewing past literature both in historic and modern articles the author traced commonalities and differences in definitions over the years and found that the term philanthropy underwent a fundamental shift over time. Sulek argued that the term has moved from being a complex definition of dispositions that led to charitable activities in the era of enlightenment to the more modern understanding which more simply described the act of charitable support. For the purpose of this study, Salamon's (1992) definition provided a modern guideline where the author interpreted philanthropy as, "Private giving for public purpose."

Fitzpatrick and Deller (2000) traced the practice of American philanthropy back to its

origins in 1630 and a sermon entitled *A Modell of Christian Charity*, by Massachusetts Bay Colony founder John Winthrop. Based firmly in Puritan religious beliefs, the sermon was not particularly revolutionary, but marked the start of a charitable practice in what would eventually become the United States of America. That charitable practice has prospered over the course of time, and in modern day is an established sector of the market economy that contains some 1.41 million non-profit organizations and had an economic impact of over 900 billion dollars in 2014 (McKeever 2015).

Giving USA, a semi-annual report published by Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy reported that during the 2014 fiscal year, Americans gave \$358.38 billion dollars to charitable organizations across the country (Giving USA, 2015). Of that total sum, seventy-two percent of donations came from individual donors providing a strong indication that the practice of individual philanthropy remained alive and well among the general population of the United States. The 2014 report noted that Americans were both increasingly generous and very consistent in what causes they gave to, with historically strong categories of religion and education the top two causes. Giving specifically to the national parks is relatively small according to the Giving USA report. Findings indicated that three percent of all donations (just over a billion dollars) were given to environmental and animal based causes with an additional seven percent (over two billion USD) given to causes labeled as public-society benefits.

One study examined these categories and took issue with the term philanthropists being applied to these service-providing non-profits. Barnes and McCarville, (2005) delivered an argument that addressed those who supported causes such as the parks, and examined giving to performance-based leisure providers. In their study which focused on supporters of a symphony, the two authors maintained that within charitable giving there were two distinct groups of donors

who supported causes, philanthropists and patrons. Philanthropists were defined as being more concerned with helping others in need while patrons were identified as those who supported causes that they would later be direct beneficiaries of (by way of future performances). Reported patrons were understood to have both personal and public reasons for supporting the cause, such as a person who donated to a symphony because they wanted to continue to hear annual Christmas concerts or someone sponsoring a workshop for those auditioning to join the symphony. However, the authors argued that the focus of those giving was helping the cause better serve themselves, as both donation types allow the supporter to continue enjoying the music produced. One directly funded the group and the other provided a workshop opportunity for musicians to ensure that the quality of talent and thus performance will remain high.

In the context of a park, performance can differ from the author's study of a symphony. While those giving to park non-profits may have similar reasons for support as the patrons of an arts community, the differences in opportunities or 'performance' provided make this shift in charitable giving terminology unsuitable for organizations supporting the national parks. For example, someone who donated to wolf research in a park might enjoy wolf watching, but their donation does not directly influence the likelihood of seeing a wolf on a given visit. In contrast, it is possible for a donor to contribute to a project (a historic structure restoration) that does directly affect the opportunities provided by a park, thus giving some merit to both sides of the semantic argument. For the purposes of this study, only the term of philanthropist is used. This is due to the fact that the term patron can also apply to those who pay a nominal fee and not the additional effort put forth by those who donate to park partners.

### **An Overview of Philanthropy in Parks**

An examination of giving specific to the national parks is difficult. Under federal law,



park units are prohibited from directly soliciting funds from the visiting public. Donation tools such as collection boxes are allowed, but these monetary sources provide relatively little income (NPS 2014). As a result of these restrictions, many of the 408 units of the National Park Service partner with non-profit friends groups, foundations, and associations that provide fiscal, programmatic, and advocacy support to the individual park units. No comprehensive, complete listing of these organizations existed to provide a breakdown of financial support provided to the parks due to the fragmented nature of non-profit organizations that partner with national parks. However, a 2010 study by the National Park Foundation (NPF) attempted to provide a holistic picture of giving in the national park system with a survey of park friends groups and cooperating associations.

The NPF contacted 246 of these park partners, of which 111 responded to the survey. The survey examined organization size, budget, mission, and challenges faced, among other topics. The NPF found growth in the number of such organizations and a heavy importance placed on fundraising as primary trends among all park non-profits. Small organizations with no full time staff and limited budgets to large ones with 20 or more full time staff with million plus dollar budgets all highlighted fundraising as a primary goal. Small non-profits notably had a greater reliance on individual donors compared to the broad income sources utilized by larger groups. The foundation further found that in terms of actual support given to the park, a slight majority of park partners (58%) gave either under \$50,000 a year to the partnering unit while the other 42 percent contributed \$50,000 to over a million each year. The majority of non-profits gave between \$1,000 and \$1,000,000, with just over 7 percent of groups providing no financial support at all and just over 5 percent of groups giving over a million each year. An earlier Park Foundation (2003) report estimated that park partners gave some \$70,000,000 a year to partners.

Considering the growth in the number of non-profits since then, that monetary amount has likely increased.

## **Philanthropy and Research**

A prolific amount of research has been conducted in the philanthropic field since it's origination as an economic sector in the late 19th and early 20th century. Much work has been directed towards specific causes, chief among them giving to religious and educational institutions. Other fields such as medical giving, poverty, and the arts also received attention from scholars, with those causes that raised the greatest dollar amounts receiving the most attention. Within the field of philanthropic research, one of the largest subsets of inquiry have been the attempts to understand why people support causes. Scholars have produced many different hypotheses to explain giving in the last one hundred and fifty years of research, with most modern academics agreeing that giving derives from a number of different factors that intertwine with each other (Schervish 1995, Bennet 2006, Bekkers and Wiepking, 2010).

In the last fifteen years, Dutch scholars René Bekkers and Pamala Wiepking provided a number of broad reviews within the field to consolidate giving factors and better understand why people give. Their review of empirical philanthropic studies (2010) explored eight unique mechanisms that help drive giving to causes, and provided a holistic view of past research done in the philanthropic field. Since that study, the mechanisms defined by other authors have covered these giving factors, though the names given to mechanisms by other scholars may differ. With these facts in mind, the general review and summary of work done on reasons for giving is structured into the eight mechanisms defined by Bekkers and Wiepking, with the addition of more recent studies as needed.

## **Eight Mechanisms of Giving**

### **Awareness of Need**

Established by common sense in addition to the particular literature, a donor must first be aware of a need present in society before making a decision to give. Labeled a prerequisite by Bekkers and Wiepking (2010), research in this area examined how potential donors became aware of a need in society, and how non-profits contribute to that process via solicitation, another mechanism discussed further in the following section. In the philanthropic field, a donor's prior knowledge of a non-profit or brand name has been shown to affect the decision to give (Foxall 1990, Cheung and Chan, 2009). Much like in the private sector, a known quantity, such as the Red Cross or United Way, was cited as being easier to recognize and remember. In experiments conducted, studies generally agreed that the amount of help given is positively related to the perceived degree of need portrayed by a cause (Levitt & Kornhaber 1977, Wagner & Wheeler 1969, Schwartz 1974, Lee & Farrell 2003).

The process of bringing awareness of a need to donors directly intertwines with the idea of solicitation, or a request for support of some kind, as the two ideas are commonly found together in a non-profit's message (first a statement of need is issued, then a request made). However, awareness of need is not limited to such solicitations, and work conducted by Mejova, Garimella, Weber, and Dougal (2014), Simon (1997), and Adams (1986) found that exposure of causes through media sources resulted in an increase in giving for causes from natural disasters to local charities. They noted that a solicitation often also accompanied these media reports (the modern day Red Cross text to donate option being one that frequently appeared on media sources.)

## **Solicitation**

Solicitation, the act of asking for support, monetary or otherwise, is very closely intertwined with the preceding mechanism, awareness of need. Defined as a separate mechanism due to the numerous different ways of soliciting support from potential philanthropists, work in the economics and psychology fields has sought to better understand the effectiveness of various methods and techniques. Bennet (2005) observed that solicitations, similar to marketing approaches are either tangible in form (letters requesting a donation, billboards, online approaches, etc.) or intangible in form (a door to door campaign, interaction with a person helped by a cause, media broadcast, etc.) and observed that who was being solicited to also served as an important distinguishing factor in the decision to give. While largely unimportant to the specific questions under examination, Bekker and Wiepking (2011a; 2011b) provided a second review in the giving field specifically directed towards examining research on that question. In general, older generations, those with a past in philanthropic activity, and people with strong religious beliefs are more likely to respond to solicitation by a charitable group.

A number of studies examined the effects of solicitations as a whole. Bryant, Slaughter, Kang, and Tax (2003) and Bekkers (2005a), found that over 80 percent of giving at certain philanthropic events was initiated after a solicitation. These studies further implied that the greater amount of solicitation a potential donor was exposed to, the more likely a donation would be made. Studies by Tichern (2001), Lee and Farrell (2003), Simmons & Emanuele (2004) and Wiepking & Maas (2009), further agreed that more solicitation led to more giving, but cautioned that method and audience were important matters to consider when increasing requests. Sokolowski (1996), Marx (2000) disagreed with those who found a positive association between more solicitation and increased donations. The authors found no association and further raised

the concern of donor burnout, where too many requests could lead to the total loss of a donor. A related idea was examined by Meer (2011) and Andreoni, Rao, and Trachtman (2011) which examined the idea of avoidance during a solicitation. The studies found that while donation amounts were 75 percent greater after a direct solicitation, some 30 percent of those approached for donations outright avoided contact with the solicitor once potential donors observed what was being asked.

### **Cost and Benefits**

Giving to a charitable cause once a potential donor has been solicited has prerequisite costs and potential benefits. Costs included such things as time, effort, and the cost of the actual gift itself. For the purpose of this section, costs and benefits are those tangible effects that in part can help influence a donor to give as other intangible benefits are covered under the mechanisms of altruism and psychological benefits.

Studies by Bekkers (2005c), Karlan & List (2006), Loftin (2007), Alpízar, Martinsson and Nordén (2014) examined the cost of giving itself, that is the amount of a donation and found that the lower the dollar amount requested for a gift, the more likely it was to be granted. Additionally, work by Reingen (1978) and Pandelaere et al. (2010) further found that charitable groups that solicited for and received a small donation, and later returned to ask for a larger gift were more likely to be supported by potential donors. Desmet (1999) agreed with other work done on the escalation of gifts and further argued that regular solicitation for higher amounts was likely to be more effective among irregular donors. Desmet's experiment found that those who gave greater amounts were likely to give less often without solicitation, and while regular solicitation had the potential to steer frequent donors away, the opposite held true for irregular donors.

Beyond donation amounts, a number of scholars have produced work on additional monetary costs of giving, such as the effect of tax deductions or lack thereof. Andreoni & Payne, 2003, Brooks, 2003b, Simmons & Emanuele (2004), and Peloza and Steel (2005) among many other studies, loosely agreed that tax deductions for various charitable cause groups had a positive influence on giving, with specific amounts varying dependent on cause. Religious giving, for example, was less likely to be affected by a decrease in tax deductions than other causes.

Examining the effects of tangible benefits on giving, studies were divided into two subcategories, incentives and gifts. Incentives are benefits such as exclusive dinners or tours, as well as discounts for services partnered with the charitable organization (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2010). Such incentives are designed to bring donors into contact with each other so they can interact and be further solicited for future donations. Essentially money invested in donors by charities as seen by research in the educational and arts giving fields, found that the more money spent on alumni and patrons, the greater amount would be given in return (Buraschi & Cornelli 2002, Baade & Sundberg, 1996a and 1996b).

Smith and McSweeney (2010) further found that such benefits were not a driving factor behind the decision to give itself, affecting only the amount, as other factors such as altruism, personal-values, and obtaining results mattered more. A final incentive explored by scholars was termed as future benefits. Mostly applicable to medical and religious giving, Burgoyne et al., (2005) observed that the decision to give could be viewed as an exchange for future expected service.

In the investigation of the role of gifts such as small, cheap trinkets, informational updates about the cause, name recognition in publications, and similar items, much of the

research conducted disagreed on whether a positive or negative correlation between these gifts and the decision to donate existed. Newman (2012) and Chen et al. (2006) both found that giving thank you gifts had no effect on the decision to give, and argued that gifts reduced altruistic feelings which were more important to the giving decision. Newman's experiment further found that when gifts given matched altruistic ideals, this negativity ceased. In contrast, Edlund, Sagarin and Johnson (2007) found that a free water bottle was likely to increase the purchase of tickets sold at a non-profit raffle. The authors raised a further question of how gifts are offered or presented as an avenue for further research. Many of the scholars who examined tangible benefits stated that those benefits only partially explained giving behavior, with such other factors as altruism, explained in the following section, as also contributing.

### **Altruism**

Altruism is defined by Merriam-Webster as, "Behavior by an animal that is not beneficial to or may be harmful to itself but that benefits others of its species." In philanthropic literature, altruism is generally defined as giving due to care about the consequences of donation. Economists have conducted much of the work that examined this mechanism, and further defined and took issue with the idea of altruism. Andreoni (1988) was one of the first who examined and dismissed the idea of so-called pure altruism, defined as charitable support that has no benefit for the one supplying the support. He noted several issues that the theory could not explain. These included the idea of government aid contributions not crowding out private altruism and the theory of free-riding.

The idea of crowding out concerns government funding that helps enable an institution to operate. Since purely altruistic private donors would give only to support an institution that needed help, the introduction of government support for that cause should result in a decrease in

private giving. Donors would observe funding coming from other sources and conclude their assistance is no longer needed. Eckel, Grossman, and Johnston (2005) and Andreoni and Payne 2011 among others further confirmed the phenomenon and observed that part of the crowding out that occurred was due to the charities themselves reducing their donation efforts. In essence, the additional government aid caused charities to lower levels of effort dedicated to solicitation. As a result, awareness of need and donations both decreased. Heutel (2014) explored a reverse crowding type where increased private donations caused a decrease in public funding but found no evidence of this behavior occurring.

The second problem, free-riding, is simply the idea of non-participation in giving, relying on others to pay for the good that all utilize. Martin and Randal (2008) provided an example in their experiments with a donation box at an otherwise free museum. Upon seeing prior donations already in the box, no-one who visited during a given time period provided further contributions, thus enjoying the resource at the expense of others.

The stringent definition of pure altruism is only a subset of a greater whole. Andreoni (1989, 1990) further proposed an alternative theory known as impure altruism. Using economic modeling he highlighted how people not only gave to public causes due to the observed need, but also gave to causes due to the emotional benefits or ‘warm glow’ they as donors received when supporting a cause. Wiepking and Bekkers (2010) acknowledged this effect, and noted how it fell under a separate mechanism in their schema, that of psychological benefits.

### **Psychological Benefits**

In their review of giving literature, Bekkers and Wiepking (2010) separate the idea of a warm-glow, or impure altruism, from the idea of altruism itself, examining it as a separate and individual entity. This is partially due to the research examined in the respective sections,



altruism being primarily economic work, and this psychological section conducted by psychologists. This section addresses two sub-themes, the idea of a warm glow derived from giving and the effects of self-image post-donation.

### ***Warm Glow***

Rose-Ackerman (1996) largely agreed with Andreoni's idea of impure altruism known as the warm-glow effect, and also dismissed the concept of pure altruism to further define altruists as those who are motivated and feel some obligation to help charitable causes. Various economic and psychological experiments examined the idea of warm glow giving, to confirm its existence and addressed topics such as the crowding out effect. Andreoni's (1990) modeling of impure altruism provided a much more accurate view of donations from people, and also addressed why government grants do not necessarily crowd out private donations. He further observed how this effect can be used to secure a greater level of giving when taxes are influenced among those who give. Those who had less income and those who are taxed more were still likely to give to a cause if taxes are increased, if not quite as much as before. Those who were richer (and statistically more altruistic) were likely to give even more with tax cuts freeing up additional income.

Crumpler (2008) studied the effect of warm-glow on giving with an experiment designed to negate pure altruism and determine if the psychological or 'feel good' effect of donating was present. Participants in the study were given \$10, and presented with the opportunity to give a portion of that sum to a charitable cause. Those taking part were also informed that after they had made their donation, those running the study would give an additional sum to the charity that ensured the total donation would be no greater than \$10. The additional sum provided by the proctor removed any purely altruistic motivations (i.e. giving just to help) from consideration within the study, since the charity would receive the same amount regardless of a person's

donation or lack thereof. Results showed that participants in the experiment gave away on average 20 percent of their '\$10 endowment' despite knowledge of the proctor's intent to contribute a sum that would round to \$10, and provided evidence of an impure altruism.

Konow (2010) further examined the idea of impure altruism in a review of empirical studies, and focused his attentions on separate and unique definitions for the two terms used interchangeably by other scholars. The two terms, warm glow effect and impure altruism were identified by the author and separated. Konow defined the warm glow effect as those donors who give to 'feel good' which he categorized as a subset of the larger concept of impure altruism. This definition of impure altruism stated that donors received compensation in the form of gifts for giving, but did not donate solely for, or even expect, those physical benefits. Konow also divided the bigger concept of altruism into two separate categories, unconditional and conditional giving. The former category included the more common pure, impure, warm-glow theories of altruism already covered and, the author stated, did not rely on social norms. The latter group consisted of social behaviors such as cooperation, conformity, need, and others and are explained further in the self-image and reputation sections.

### ***Self-Image***

Similar to the reputation mechanism that follows, the psychological benefits of self-image revolve in part around social norm theory and the personal norms that support it. Perkins and Berkowitz (1986) first introduced social norm theory with their studies on underage drinking behaviors in the 1980s. Berkowitz (2005) identified social norm theory as examining, "situations in which individuals incorrectly perceive the attitudes and/or behaviors of peers and other community members to be different from their own when in fact they are not." Initially formed as a way of examining and then correcting negative and illegal societal concerns such as drug use, the theory has since spread and been used to examine other attitudes and behaviors. Cialdini

(2003) identified two types of behavioral norms used in the theory, descriptive and injunctive. The former refers to perceptions of behavior of other people in a person's life and community while the latter examines the perceived right or wrongness of performed actions. More simply, the two norm types address what is right and wrong, popular and unpopular. The theory is based on the idea of personal norms or values contributing to the effect of greater social norms followed by a community.

In the charitable community, Bekkers and Wiepking (2010) noted, "When the social norm is to give, those who feel bad about themselves for violating the norm are more likely to give. Not giving would entail feelings of guilt, shame, or dissonance with one's self-image." Hibbert, Smith, and Davies (2007) and Basil, Ridgeway, and Basil (2008) further examined the role that emotional appeals had on donor norms and the decision to give. The authors found that while potential guilt was a factor (i.e. going counter to a perceived social norm to give), those solicited were more likely to develop coping methods such as skepticism and began to disregard such emotional appeals as merely advertising tactics. Earlier work by Schwartz (1970), Konečki, (1972), and Regan, Williams, & Sparling, (1972) provided evidence that giving was likely to make donors think better of themselves, and provided a way to help repair a self-image after an earlier harm.

### **Reputation**

Complementary to the impure aspects of altruism and the more general psychological benefits that serve as a giving motivator, is the mechanism of reputation from Bekkers and Wiepking (2010). Hardy and Van Vugt (2006) termed this mechanism competitive altruism in their work that examined giving and donor social standing. The authors conducted three studies that examined altruistic behaviors and the resulting effects on social standing within groups and

found that increased giving tended to elevate social status within the experiments. Unlike impure altruism, the competitive theory relied largely on public awareness of altruistic behavior. The underlying tenets posit giving makes a donor stand out and as a result the donor gained status in the eyes of other donors and community members. Hardy and Van Vugt further noted that public donations tended to be higher due to the greater social awareness. Additionally, the authors found in competitive giving, the supporters themselves became competed for by other charitable foundations as partners, as the various nonprofits sought to add these generous givers to their membership and donor lists.

Harbaugh, (1998) measured this effect and examined how such public identifiers as being listed on physical donor recognition features, donation level recognition on social media, and social events like dinners are all ways of identification that help non-profits increase support. The author found that public prestige factors did play a substantial role in affecting donation amount. Exploring one particular explanation for this outcome, formation and influence of ‘reference groups’ was identified as a tool of non-profits to encourage increased giving. A reference group, or more simply a group of peers, is a body of roughly equivalent supporters which any given donor could compare his giving level to and compete against. The author noted how this kind of group could be brought together at the varying social functions of a non-profit, and particularly generous donors from the membership recognized to further encourage competitive giving among the members.

In contrast to the other studies Raihani (2014) examined data from a fundraising database and argued that while public donation inspired competition and incentive to give, those who were very high level and low level donors tended to remain anonymous. The author attributed this concealing behavior to the idea of violation of normal societal behavior, stating that those who

gave more or less than what was normal chose anonymity to avoid exclusion or other punishment by group members. Raihani explained negative responses to high level donation were partially explained by framing high level awards as a competitive act in a co-operative setting. In a group of supporters all working together to support a cause, the author argued that other supporters view high-level givers negatively since not every supporter may be interested or capable of 'competing' or giving at higher levels, and their personal image or standing in society would suffer as a result.

### **Values**

Bekkers and Wiepking (2010) defined values in the context of giving as, "intangible phenomena located within individuals, originating from donors, and targeted at themselves as well as beneficiaries." While the formation of values is beyond the scope of this review, the application of value categories such as prosocial, pro-environmental, altruistic, spiritual, and others is not. Work by a number of scholars, including Bekkers & Schuyt, 2008, Bekkers, (2006b, 2007), Van Lange et al., 2007, and Konow (2010) all agreed that donors who identified with these value categories have a greater likelihood of giving due to their desire to make the world a better place according to their ideals.

What that ideal world looks like depends on one's value system. Through giving, donors may wish to make the distribution of wealth and health more equal; they may wish to reduce poverty, empower women, to safeguard human rights, to protect animals, wildlife, or the ozone layer. Donors may also have objectives that are partisan or even terrorist. Supporting a cause that changes the world in a desired direction is a key motive for giving that has received very little attention in the literature. (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2010)

Bennet (2003) found that the closer a potential givers' personal values were to that of an organizations, the more likely a gift would be made. Examining support for environmental causes as affected by values, Cialdini (2003) and Halpenny (2010) agreed with earlier work done. Similarly in other charitable categories as healthcare, religion, and politics the same trend

occurred.

### **Efficacy**

Last of the eight mechanisms of giving is that of efficacy. Efficacy was defined as, “The power to produce an effect” by Merriam-Webster and by Bekkers and Wiepking (2010) as, “the perception of donors that their contribution makes a difference to the cause they are supporting.” Similar to the idea of altruism, the two terms differ in that the former is concerned with the cause at hand while the latter examines the effect on a cause supported. The idea of efficacy being important to donors is commonly accepted. Arumi et al. (2005); Diamond & Kashyap (1997); Duncan, (2004) and Mathur, (1996) all agreed that when philanthropists perceived their gifts will not impact a cause, they were less likely to give to that cause. Borgloh, Dannenburg, and Artex (2013) further noted that the size of an organization could be of importance when making the decision to give. The authors observed a donor was more likely to give to a smaller charity group, where they perceived their donation would have a greater impact. Prendergast and Hak Wai Maggie (2013) examined sustained giving programs in the context of child sponsoring, and found that frequent progress reports on the child sponsor, in effect, the efficacy of program, and provided donors with incentive to maintain or increase their giving level.

Perceptions of efficacy also were noted to skew towards the positive. Kerr (1989) and Buraschi and Cornelli (2002) noted that donors frequently over-estimated the effectiveness of their gifts, and that this held true particularly for low-income donors. Leadership and matched giving was another area where perceived efficacy has been noted in experiments to influence the decision to give and give in greater amounts. Related to the idea of reputation and competitive philanthropy, Chen et al. (2006) and Landry et al. (2006) noted that when potential donors observed peers making donations, they in turn were more likely to contribute to the cause.

Reviewing the eight mechanisms defined by Bekkers and Wiepking, the overlap and complexity inherent within many of the concepts is apparent. Built off of prior work by scholars who sought to construct a specific model of giving (Scott 1988, Schervish, 1995, Sargeant 1999), the elements of these earlier models all find places within the mechanisms. Bekkers and Wiepking cautioned fellow scholars and noted that while these mechanisms all were important and relevant, their work was not designed as a model of giving. Examining to what extent these mechanisms overlap, and the amount of weight donors place upon each one was a virtually unexplored field, the authors urged further study in that direction.

### **Philanthropy and the National Parks**

Similar to the greater philanthropic field at large, there has been substantial work examining philanthropy and the National Park System. Vaughn and Cortner (2013) provided a holistic overview of the subject in their book *Philanthropy and the National Park Service*. The authors discussed in detail the wide range of philanthropic work invested in the park service by way of land donations, non-profit partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and volunteerism. However, the majority of the author's work was dedicated to an examination of the structure of these relationships, and as such motivations for the varied types of support provided were not actively discussed. Most work conducted directly on giving behavior in parks have utilized donation boxes as the primary experiment device and examined the conditions that best induce people to give using that method.

### **Donation Boxes and Social Norms.**

Some research has been conducted on the role of social norms in influencing charitable giving for public lands. Loftin (2007) undertook a study of donation box contributions in the Arkansas State Park system using the social norm of conformity to see if different messaging,

visibility of prior donations, and ‘seed money’ (small currency amounts placed in a box prior to donations to make it appear as if others had already given) would affect donation behavior. The author concluded that no significant relationship could be drawn between the social norm examined and donation behavior. The study found most of the methods indicated less giving than the control group. Loftin noted in closing that factors such as entrance fees, holidays, and day of the week could affect the outcome and that more work was needed to greater explore the topic. In contrast to Loftin’s findings, several other researchers examined similar norms at other park areas with similar methods and arrived at different conclusions.

Martin and Randal (2008) focused their attention on the social norm of conformity in giving. Four different amounts of currency (no amount, fifty cents, five dollars, and fifty dollars) were placed in a donation box and both the tendency to give and amount given observed for each level of seed money. The authors drew four conclusions from the result; non-empty boxes resulted in higher average donations, the fifty cent amount resulted in more giving than the empty box only due to the greater number of people who donated upon seeing the seed funds. The five and fifty dollar amounts saw similar results and both seed levels were found to increase giving amount and giving participation. Lastly, the highest tendency to donate was found to occur at the fifty cent ‘seed’ level while the greatest average donation amount occurred in both the five and fifty dollar bill amounts.

Alpizar et. al. (2008) conducted a similar empirical study at a Costa Rican National Park, and considered the social norms of anonymity, reciprocity, and conformity in regards to donation behavior. The addition of an observer/solicitor, small gift before requesting a donation, and information on recommended gift size were used to determine each respective norm’s effect on giving. Of the three, the authors found that the use of an observer increased giving amounts by a



fourth. Additionally, a small gift given to prospective donors in advance was found to increase the likelihood that a donation would be made. Additional information on common donation amounts resulted in two findings; greater participation in giving behaviors when the recommended giving level was low and greater amounts given but less participation when the recommended donation amount was listed as higher. The norms of anonymity, reciprocity, and conformity used in the donation box studies, are also utilized by park non-profits to attract and maintain donors and as such have value to the greater question of why donors support park-based charitable organizations.

### **Non-Profits and Parks**

A growing body of work on non-profit groups that support recreation areas like national parks has emerged in recent years, focused on the examination of organizations dedicated to supporting a national park or multiple parks politically, socially, and financially. Vaughn and Cortner's work on philanthropy in the National Park Service have identified two primary types of non-profits in which most federal and many state and local parks partner. The larger of the two group types are commonly known as the 'friends groups'. Loosely defined as philanthropic non-profits who help raise funds and provide other services for partnering, Vaughn and Cortner recognized a diversity of groups with different names, operational set-ups, and levels of successfulness in their goal of providing support for national parks. Common ways of fund raising for such groups included private and corporate solicitation, grants, outside foundational support, and more (Vaughn and Cortner, 2014). Funds provided by such groups varied from park to park. The Yellowstone Park Foundation gave over eight million dollars in support in 2015 to Yellowstone (YPF, 2015). In contrast, Friends of the Virgin Islands National Park averaged just over four hundred thousand dollars in donations a year (Fortwangler, 2007).

The authors identified the second major group of non-profits as cooperating associations. The groups were found to be less numerous than the ‘friends groups’, but more stable. An association’s primary focus was defined as supporting educational activities in and around the park(s) in which they were partnered. Referred to as ‘the bookstore people’ these organizations attain income from retail sales of park related merchandise, educational classes held in partnering park units, and membership fees. The authors noted that membership in such associations provided benefits such as discounts on association merchandise, educational trips, and with other concessionaires connected with the park unit in addition to any altruistic benefits (Vaughn and Cortner, 2014). The last available report from the NPS showed that nationally, associations gave some \$28.2 million to park partners in direct financial aid for the year 2007 (NPS 2007).

### **Drawbacks to Non-profit Partners**

Though the non-profits have been viewed as key in helping decrease the impact of budget deficits in government funding, Fortwangler (2007), Walls (2014), and Vaughn and Cortner, (2014) all cautioned that non-profit partners have caused negative impacts upon the park units. Fortwangler examined the case of Virgin Island National Park, and its Friends group, and noted that many of the supporters and donors to that group were non-locals, and that this representation hid the local voice and their respective concerns. Fortwangler and the book authors also observed that many park non-profit groups were dedicated to providing as much funding as was possible for the park. This led to concerns that with more and more of a park’s budget being provided by private interests, the non-profits held increasing power in how the park itself was managed.

Wall (2014) also touched on those topics in her article on private funding for parks, but focused more heavily on issues such as free-riding, crowding out of government funds, and uncertainty in funding from year to year while relying on non-profits. These concerns, studied

extensively under altruistic research, are applied to urban city park settings. In her work the author only provided hypothetical situations for all but crowding out of public funds. Addressing the issue of crowding out of public funds she utilized a unique situation in a Central Park in New York City, a situation not generalized to park systems at large. Alpizar, Martinsson, and Norden (2014) echoed Wall's concerns about free-riding and crowding out of funds in their study of the effects of entrance fees on donations in a Costa Rican National Park. The authors found some decrease in donations occurred when a mandatory entrance fee was imposed, but that the level of decline in giving was related to the activity in which the visitor participated. The author further observed that donations among those who visited to swim, sunbathe, and engage in similar activities declined more than those who came to explore the natural resources of the park.

### **Repeat Visitors and Park Support**

In examining support for the national parks, all of the work examined thus far has revolved around the idea of charitable giving. While important, this direct form of support is only one of several ways that people can support parks. Indirect support, more commonly known as pro-environmental behaviors (Halpenny 2010) are less recognized but important aspects of park support. Sivek and Hungerford (1989, 1990) defined pro-environmental behaviors as, "actions by an individual or group that promotes or results in the sustainable use of natural resources." Such actions can manifest as many different behaviors such as; political or social advocacy, upholding park rules, and leave no trace ideals. Understanding motivations for such pro-environmental behaviors has been a study of subject for some time, particularly within the last fifteen years.

### **Pro-Environmental Behaviors**

Stern (2000) proposed a framework for understanding motivations behind these behaviors modeled off a value-belief-norm approach, and noted that understanding pro-environmental

behaviors in general and the variables that influence them were dauntingly complex. The author's framework consisted of attitudes, personal capabilities, contextual factors, and habits that all influenced two distinct kinds of pro-environmental behaviors, environmental activism, and private sphere environmentalism. The former consisted of actions such as policy support, protests, joining groups, financial action, and similar behaviors while the latter was more concerned with lifestyle choices such as shopping behaviors, waste disposal versus recycling, and conserving resources such as water and electricity.

Hung Lee, Jan, and Yang (2013) focused specifically on the tourist market in their attempt to build a measurement tool for environmentally responsible behaviors. Different in that pro-environmental behaviors were a subset of what they termed environmentally responsible behaviors, the authors constructed a list of such behaviors that included and expanded on Stern's (2000) work. To more accurately identify the behaviors under examination the authors divided environmentally responsible behaviors into two categories, general and site-specific. The former category contained behaviors such as financial, legal, political, physical, and educational actions with the latter consisted of sustainable (respecting local cultural and conserves environment), pro-environmental (visits area less to aid restoration of resource), and environmentally friendly (actions taken to reduce resource damage) behaviors.

While Hung Lee, Jan, and Yang's (2013) environmentally responsible behaviors are largely echoed in other research, most other scholars who examined formation of such terms have utilized Stern's (2000) term pro-environmental behaviors and its accompanying definition (Vaske and Korbin 2001, Halpenny 2010, Scannell and Gifford 2010) . Much of the research on what drives visitors to express these behaviors has focused on the idea of place attachment to locations.

### ***Tourism, Natural Settings, and Place Attachment***

Williams, et al. (1992) examined emotional and symbolic place attachment in wilderness place settings. The authors used four wilderness areas and found that prior visitation, importance of physical features, along with visitation numbers and encounters to all be factors that contributed to the level of attachment visitors had to the area. Similarly, Eisenhauer, Krannich, and Blahna (2000) examined reasons for place attachment on public lands and found the primary two reasons were due to the environmental features of that area, or due to interaction with companions they were with in that area. Additionally, the authors found that activities undertaken by those attached to public lands differed from community to community. Specific activities depended on local values and culture, the prime two reasons for attachment.

Brandenburg's (1995) article focused on the effect of place creation on values and meanings examined a national forest river drainage area, and how the meanings of the drainage changed from those who view it as a space to those who have made the area a place. The author conducted interviews with local stakeholders of the national forest, asking about potential development and extractive industry occurring in the river drainage. Those who viewed the area as a space (who had not visited the area, or who were members of communities formerly dependent on extractive industries) saw the area as a location to be utilized, while those who were close to the drainage and attached to what they saw as a place, were protective of the resource, expressing place meanings that ran counter to the timber industry and forest service. The author noted a third group of stakeholders, community members who were members of the recreation industry who also thought the area should be preserved, but better utilized as a leisure area. Brandenburg drew forth the observation that individual opinions on the area could be repressed when in company of other individuals of the different interest groups, and only expressed in solo interviews. This, he observed did not vary among the study areas.

Farnum, et al. (2005) also examined sense of place or place attachment in natural resource settings, and particularly in one section of their work looked into the formation of attachment to these settings. They acknowledged the four common theories of origination, biological propensities, environmental features, psychological developments, and sociocultural processes and proceeded to look into the proposed biological foundations of sense of place in greater detail. Experiential components of attachment are examined next, and tied back to Tuan and related scholars. Finally, sociocultural underpinnings are examined, in essence, shared meanings by groups of different peoples.

Likewise Moore and Graefe (1994) who examined attachment to a specific recreation setting (rail-trail users), found similar reasons for attachment. The authors identified the two key dimensions of place dependence, or the importance of the physical environment, and place identity- attachment for symbolic or emotional reasons. In their analysis of rail-trail place users, the authors argued that the more frequent the visitor to the site, the stronger their degree of place attachment was likely to be. This idea was then directly related to distance from the place, and those that lived closest to the site were identified as visiting the most often. The authors noted that this was in line with the literature they had reviewed, and went on to suggest that, “Level of place attachment could also prove to be a useful tool for identifying volunteers and other donors for long-term commitments and identifying people who should be brought into public involvement processes.”

### **Pro-Environmental Behaviors and Place Attachment**

A number of scholars have examined the role played by place attachment in motivating visitors to engage in pro-environmental behaviors and generally agreed that place attachment and its sub-elements play an important role in predicting pro-environmental behavior. Work by

scholars (Lokocz, Ryan and Sadler, 2011; Chen, Wu, and Huang, 2013; Tonge et al., 2014, Lee, 2011;) and others all agreed that place attachment was an important predictor and needed component that led to pro-environmental behaviors. Work by Scannell and Gifford (2010) proposed that two separate types of place attachment, civic (attachment at a group i.e. city level) and natural (attachment to varying natural features), be considered when examining such behaviors, and found that natural attachment contributed to visitors engaging in pro-environmental actions while civic did not.

Three other articles by Halpenny (2010) and (Ramkissoon, Smith, and Weiler (2013a, 2013b) all agreed with other scholars that place attachment was a significant motivator for such behavior, and argued for a separate two sub-dimension model to further understand the role of place attachment. The authors defined the first as place affect (emotions and feelings for a place) and place identity (assessment of a place). In their experiment, Ramkissoon, Smith, and Weiler (2013a) observed that only place affect was associated with support behaviors.

Disagreeing with the majority, studies by Brehm, Eisenhauer, and Stedman (2013), and White, Wirten, and van Riper (2008) found no evidence that place attachment led to support behaviors. The authors instead argued the role ideas such as of place dependence (being the only location where an activity can be done, for example) and place meanings as more significant indicators of pro-environmental behaviors.

### **Place Attachment and Repeat Visitors**

For this study, repeat visitors are being examined in regards to pro-environmental behaviors rather than first time visitors due to the different nature of the repeat visitor and the greater amount of experience with the area. Opperman (1996), Correia, Oliveria, Butler (2008), and Morais and Lin (2010) found that repeat visitors viewed and utilized destinations differently

than first time visitors. First time visitors were concerned with just the touristic image and activities of a place. In contrast, repeat visitors were far more interested in activities, showed attachment to the place, and had interest in introducing other first time visitors to the place.

Li, Cheng, Kim, and Petrick (2007) stated in a study of visitors that those who returned to a destination multiple times did so to engage in specific reactional activities while first time visitors were more interested in general touristic opportunities (sight-seeing, popular attractions, etc). Kemperman and Joh (2003) noted similar activity patterns among visitors and further observed that the differences in the groups lessened when information about place opportunities was utilized by first time visitors.

The progression of these concepts was described by Ramkissoon, Smith, and Weiler (2013) as a linear process, where repeat visitation played a significant role among several variables that led to place attachment which in turn motivated those visitors to engage in pro-environmental behaviors. Cheng and Kuo (2015) found similar results when they examined first time visitor's tendencies to emotionally bond and become attached to a place. The authors noted that repeated visitation was not necessarily needed to form these attachment bonds if the landscape visited had similarities to others in which the visitor was already familiar. The authors further confirmed the tendency of attached visitors to exhibit pro-environmental behaviors, and like other scholars suggested that with proper management, it would be possible to obtain emotional attachment for greater numbers of new visitors.

## **Conclusion/Summary**

In summary, this chapter began with a broad introduction to both the philanthropic field at large and the industry of charitable giving in current times. Giving to the national park system was placed within this context and the complexities faced when researching the topic highlighted



the relative novelty of this research.

Next, the chapter undertook a broad review of charitable donation literature. Utilizing the framework provided by one of the most recent holistic reviews on the subject, eight giving mechanisms were addressed under which literature on the subject fell. Material discussed in these sections may not have used the same names, but the principles under study fit well into the assigned categories. Awareness of need was addressed first, being the initial building block on which the decision to give would or would not follow after. Following the linear nature of a charitable request, work on solicitation, or the actual request for a gift came next and examined how different ways of asking produced different results in potential donors.

Finishing the charitable request sequence, the mechanism of tangible costs and benefits both to donors and charities was discussed and the lack of effectiveness in thank you gifts examined. Then ideas such as giving simply to help (altruism), psychological benefits, and reputation were reviewed and focused on as some of the most direct aspects that influence the decision to give. Finally, ideas of personal values and efficacy were touched on to study how the type of cause requesting a gift, and the potential effectiveness of that gift contributed to the giving decision.

The chapter then moved on to examine philanthropic work done specifically in the context of the national parks. Research on such tools as donation boxes was examined and noted as being a minority of charitable funding gained by park units. Those responsible for the bulk of such funding, park partners, were then examined and the little work that had been done on reasons for giving to these groups discussed as related to the larger philanthropic field, revealed similarities within. The drawbacks and downsides to such park partners was examined as well, with parks cautioned to not over-invest in and extensively rely on partners whose interests may

not always align with park service missions.

Examined next were ideas of indirect, or non-monetary support utilized by non-partner supporters. The concept of pro-environmental behaviors was introduced and defined as a range of actions visitors could do to reduce their impact on the environment or otherwise help conserve it for future generations. The role of place-attachment in such behaviors was introduced and a background into that field undertaken to provide context. Discussion of work done on place attachments and such behaviors in a variety of locations was then covered and place attachment generally accepted as an important contributing factor. Finally, these concepts of place attachment and pro-environmental behavior were discussed in the context of number of visits to the location, and mixed findings about whether first time visitors could develop attachment and support behaviors examined. The next chapter outlines how, based on this review and discussions with resource managers and park partners, this study was organized and conducted.

## **Chapter Three: Design and Methods**

### **Introduction**

This chapter begins with an overview of the methods used for the study and a rationale for the choices made in selecting those methods. Next, the study area is described, the strengths of the location for the study discussed, and the non-profits that support the area introduced. Then, a discussion of research participants and the study sample selection is conducted, followed by an explanation of the qualitative interview guide to outline the specifics of the research project. The chapter finishes with an overview of the data analysis used for this study and the limitations that arose during the project.

### **Overview**

To understand the reasons and mechanisms behind visitor support for Yellowstone National Park, a qualitative research design was adopted. To understand why park supporters provided support to the park, semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen as the research method of choice. As Hesse-Biber (2010) noted, “The goal of intensive interviews is to gain rich qualitative data on a particular subject from the perspective of the selected individuals.” Adopting semi-structured interviews for the project not only allowed specific questions related to park support to be asked, but also gave study participants the ability to talk about topics not directly covered in the interview guide, and provided information relevant to the study that would have not been covered otherwise.

### **Study Area**

Yellowstone National Park (YNP) was chosen as the subject park for study due to its multiple partnering non-profit organizations, popularity among visitors, wide range of natural and historic features, and desire among both park and non-profit managers to better understand

support provided to Yellowstone. The oldest national park in the world, Yellowstone has often been referred to as the flagship park of the National Park Service, and sees millions of visitors each year. The two supporting non-profits, the Yellowstone Association (YA) and Yellowstone Park Foundation (YPF), recently decided to merge as one organization, but this study still looks at the two separately. Yellowstone also has a wide range of historical and natural features that inspire numerous repeat visits to the park which allowed for an examination of three different support groups, YA, YPF, and repeat visitors.

The Yellowstone Association, based out of Gardiner, MT north of the park has as its mission to connect, “people to Yellowstone National Park and our natural world through education”. The YA operates educational book stores, funds park exhibits, provides educational tours via the Yellowstone Institute, and more. The Yellowstone Park Foundation, based out of Bozeman, MT lists as their mission being, “dedicated to ensuring that America’s Park endures for generations. As the official fundraising partner of Yellowstone National Park, the Foundation is committed to raising funds and resources to provide a margin of excellence for Yellowstone and its visitors’ experiences.” The YPF helps fund numerous park projects and endeavors ranging from wildlife conservation programs and native species restoration to trails work and park staff support.

While the park’s two non-profits announced a merger in mid-2015 to better unify efforts in supporting the park, how the two organizational missions will be merged is still in the early stages. When this study was conducted, there were two separate entities and members as well as donors did not know of the impending merger, hence treating them as separate entities is acceptable and might even provide additional data for the new organization in which to operate.

## **Participant Selection and Sample Framework**

For this study of Yellowstone supporters, the population was defined as all visitors who were members of the YA, donated to the YPF, or had visited the park five or more times but were not a YA member or a YPF donor. A sample of thirty participants was sought and attained, with each group of park supporters (YA, YPF, and Repeat Visitors) being represented with ten interviews each. Due to the qualitative nature of the study and the time commitment invested in each interview, the ability to generalize results of the interviews so that they would be statistically representative of the larger population was unfeasible. Rather, the study attempted to represent each of the groups under study to provide an unbiased indication of what the population is like.

Selection of participants for the sample broke down into three stages: initial recruitment of YA and YPF supporters, repeat visitor recruitment, and additional YA and YPF supporter recruitment. Contacting donors and members for participation was initially undertaken by the partnering organizations. Introductory letters, mailed out by the park partners were sent to 25 participants from each of the two non-profits. The letter explained the study, requested participation, and informed those selected that they will be contacted within two weeks by the interviewer to arrange an interview time if they are interested in participating. Calls began a week after the mailing went out, and continued until the list was exhausted

The initial sampling frame for members of the Yellowstone Association and the Yellowstone Park Foundation consisted of a total of twenty-five members of each organization (fifty total) broken into three separate groups. The first group was comprised of those who were low level or new supporters, and had made minimal contributions. The second consisted of mid-level supporters, who had given for several years, or at higher financial levels. The final group

was comprised of high level supporters who had supported Yellowstone for many years or who had given major financial contributions to the park partners. The YA and YPF conducted a random sample of supporters in each of the three types and provided the researcher with their names and phone numbers.

The sampling frame for repeat visitors to Yellowstone National Park consisted of twenty-five visitors to the park during the summer of 2015 who had visited the park at least five times in the past. In agreement with park managers, those visitors who had come to Yellowstone five or more times were selected due to the costs both in time and money that a visit to Yellowstone involved. Visitors were intercepted at all of the park exits in conjunction with another study and asked to participate in a short survey. During the survey, visitors were asked how many times they had visited Yellowstone and whether or not they were a member of YA or had donated to YPF. Only those who were not supporters of the non-profits and who had visited the park five or more times were invited to participate in the longer phone interview at a later date. Contact information was then shared, and interviews scheduled by the researcher. During selection of interviewees, care was taken to ensure that a mix of local (Montana and Wyoming) visitors and non-local visitors were asked to participate. Telephone interviews of those willing to participate continued until ten interviews had been conducted.

The list of potential participants provided by the YA and YPF as an initial sample pool was exhausted by the middle of July 2015. By that point ten interviews had been gained from the list, and the researcher had attempted to contact all others in the pool a minimum of five times. Changed contact information and lack of an answer after multiple (4-5) phone calls at varying days and times were the greatest factors that explained the lack of response. Outright refusals and lack of interest also contributed to the 20 percent initial response rate. To reach the point of

representation and saturation desired, an additional sample of YA and YPF supporters was acquired via direct contact in the park. Similar to the recruitment method for repeat visitors, park visitors were intercepted at the park exits and asked to participate during a short survey. If identified as YA or YPF supporters via the survey, the researcher asked a follow-up request for a longer phone interview, and scheduled those calls accordingly.

## **Research Instrument**

This study of YNP supporters included the development of an interview guide in support of the planned qualitative methodological approach. Interviews were conducted over phone rather than in-person for matters of practicality and sample consideration. The interview guide consisted of four sections that covered a variety of subjects derived from past research in the philanthropic and park support fields of research (Appendix A). Due to the initial exploration manner of this study, little qualitative work in the area of park support existed to derive questions for the interview guide. As such, material was taken from past qualitative work in the philanthropic field at large, and adapted with material from park support studies. Working from topical explanations of philanthropic giving by Bekkers and Wiepking (2011a, 2011b), park studies by Jorgenson and Nickerson (2014) as well as Henderson (1991), and qualitative philanthropic work by Cugliari (2005), Eikenberry (2005), and Wastyn (2009), the following topical areas were explored:

- An introductory section focused on past experiences with YNP, seeking to understand experiences visitors have in Yellowstone. Jorgenson and Nickerson (2014) and Wastyn (2009) noted the importance of experience and place attachment as indicators of philanthropic behavior and park support respectively. Jorgenson and Nickerson detailed how different levels of place attachment existed among different groups of Yellowstone

supporters. Wastyn (2009), argued in a study of alumni philanthropy, how experiences of a place are interpreted provided an important context in which potential donors make the decision to give or not give. These questions about trips, memories, and experiences all contributed to identifying the varying levels of place attachment and how experiences were perceived among park supporters. The questions also served as an easy and interesting section to begin the interview and put interviewees at ease (Henderson, 1991).

- An open ended query that asked how the supporter saw themselves as supporting the park and surrounding communities (if at all). This question allowed the interviewee to define support in their own terms and covered a range of support actions, from philanthropic donations to sustainable tourism behaviors.
- Organization and frequent visitation specific questions sought to actively draw out the reasons supporters had for joining the YNP non-profits and returning to the park. Additional questions about other non-profits that participants supported were asked to help create a larger philanthropic profile of the supporter. Many of these questions were commonly asked in qualitative philanthropic studies, and sought to answer the main research question (Cugliari, 2006). The question sets for each supporter type were substituted as needed during the section, since organizational membership or frequent visitation had been determined ahead of time.
- A final query and response section covered a list of previously discovered support techniques. This list of support methods was derived from earlier work on support in the park (Jorgenson and Nickerson, 2014) and was used to determine all methods of support visitors were providing the park. Topics already covered in prior questions were omitted



from this section. In all sections, follow-up questions were asked of interviewees to explore participant initiated topics that mattered to the park supporters.

## **Analysis**

Interviews were held via phone call for convenience of study participants and allowed a much greater geographical reach in selecting interviewees than would have otherwise been possible. Calls were undertaken via speakerphone and recorded via digital recorder. Recorded interviews were sent to a professional transcription service to speed transition from audio to text format for analysis. Prior to the first interview being transcribed, a conversation with the transcriptionist was held to ensure that interviews were transcribed verbatim and a consistent format used so transcriptions could be easily understood and utilized. Received transcripts were compared with audio to ensure accuracy and any errors found were corrected. Then transcripts were read through and a summary memo summarizing the contents of each interview was created to aid in organization and initial analysis (Appendix B).

After receiving the transcribed interviews, each text was converted into an appropriate file form and uploaded to the qualitative software program QSR NVivo which served as a research tool to aid in interview analysis. The program acted as an organizational system and coding instrument where similar sections of text were highlighted and assigned to representative themes. These codes were then sorted into appropriate categories. Ideographic analysis involved each interview being separately examined, meaningful units of text identified, and coded into relevant themes. As Patterson and Williams (1996) stated, this step allowed the researcher to, “identify predominant themes through which narrative accounts of specific experimental situations can be meaningfully organized, interpreted, and presented.”

Similarly, nomothetic analysis was then utilized to examine themes and topics important

to individual park supporters across all participants. Themes initially used for individuals, but that occurred across multiple participants were applied to make comparisons and identify contrasts among groups of supporters. These relationships among park supporters helped lead to a more general understanding of why park supporters provide the support that they did. Furthermore, the results helped identify what set the indirect supporters apart from the direct supporters of Yellowstone. The interpretation of these relationships helps unravel a general rationale for park support for direct and indirect supporters.

## **Limitations**

As with all research, this study did have several limitations. As stated earlier, an extensive review of literature found little work on reasons for park support, and instead, utilized more general past work in the philanthropic field. As such, one limitation was that this study was an initial-stage exploration of park support. The data gathered, while representative of the three groups of Yellowstone National Park supporters did not address all possible supporters. Jorgenson and Nickerson (2014) found that most, if not all, Yellowstone visitors showed a moderate level of ‘support’ for the park, and certain populations could not be covered in the scope of this study. Further investigation of Yellowstone supporters will help address these other populations.

A technical limitation that arose for several interviews was that of phone clarity and call connection. Many interviewees utilized cell phones to participate in the study and on occasion were in poor service areas. As such, a few interview transcripts are incomplete, missing sections of text, when both the transcriptionist and researcher were unable to determine what was being said. Upon realization of this, an introductory step of verifying decent phone service was included as part of the pre-interview contact, but was not always successful.

A further challenge for the study was ensuring the representation of all support levels among direct financial donors. Ten of the twenty YA and YPF donors were easily categorized by donor level due to help from the YA and YPF. The remaining ten, contacted in person, were not asked this information directly. Support level was therefore inferred from interview dialogue when possible, however, no direct questions about level of monetary donation were asked. This was to comply with non-profit partner wishes and guidance from the Office of Management and Budget. Despite these limitations, the data provided by the study participants revealed ample insights on reasons for park support, discussed in the next chapter.

A final limitation that arose during this study was the tendency for study participants to miss-categorize themselves during initial contact and later in actual interviews. Repeat visitors were the most likely to misidentify themselves, and donations they made while in Yellowstone only came to light during the interview itself. As repeat visitor participants were initially sought to provide a non-monetary perspective on park support, this reduced 'true' non-monetary donors to six participants. However, as these monetary repeat visitor participants could not remember what group they had donated to, and generally gave small amounts, they were subsequently still included under the repeat visitor designation, rather than under the YA and YPF category. Similarly, several YA members misidentified themselves as YPF donors, only correcting this error during the interview. Such misidentifications were corrected in coding and the participants sorted into the correct support group category.

## **Chapter Four: Results**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the ideographic and nomothetic analysis conducted on the interviews for this study. The chapter begins with a short commentary on the specifics of the data analysis and interpretation process before moving to examine the demographics of those interviewed. Following this, the types of support and varied reasons behind that support uncovered by the ideographic and nomothetic processes are addressed in detail. Finally, other emerging topics about Yellowstone are discussed and placed into the context of park support as appropriate.

Analysis was divided into two separate processes and began at the ideographic level where each interview was examined and sections of text coded into meaning units. This process saw text first labeled under broad meaning unit categories such as, “Support Types”, “Activities”, and “Beliefs” and was followed by categorizing smaller excerpts into more accurate meaning units such as, “Donations”, “Sharing Experiences”, “Volunteering”, and “Litter Clean Up”. Similar selections of text were grouped under the same meaning unit, and as categories grew, assigned sub-units as needed to further reflect topics under discussion by park supporters.

Once meaning units had been assigned to each of the interviews, nomothetic analysis was conducted across the interviews and meaning units reorganized into larger themes. This process was driven by the interview guide, which itself was built around the research questions of the study. Utilizing the areas of inquiry from the interview guide, several dimensions were identified to help shape the nomothetic process. As set out in the research questions, it was thought that non-profit supporters of the park would be in some way different than repeat visitors to Yellowstone and the research questions were set up to reflect that divide and allow for

identification and comparison of the expected differences and potential similarities. In data analysis, a trend that emerged was how the data did not easily divide into the different participant groups as expected. The three groups under examination had numerous similarities both in how they expressed support for the park and the reasons that drove them to do so.

Differences also emerged, but the over-arching similarity and complexity in the specifics of many aspects of Yellowstone support was apparent and called for a different approach for this results section. To better reflect the emerging themes and nature of the data, results were split into several dimensions of support, “Types of Support”, “Identified Reasons for Support”, “Underlying Reasons for Support”, and “Support for Other Causes”. This division better allowed the voices of those interviews to be heard while still allowing the research questions to be answered. Additionally, a final “Emerging Themes” section has been included to highlight topics about Yellowstone that were important to participants but that did not fit the research aims of this study.

The following section presents the dimensions associated with the research questions under examination. Types of park support identified by study participants and prior study are presented first to establish an understanding of the ways support for the park is provided and to distinguish those support methods identified by visitors. Secondly, reasons behind identified support are presented to illustrate why participants provided that support to Yellowstone. Then, other non-profit causes also supported by participants are examined to gain a further understanding of park supporters in a greater philanthropic context. Next, other topics not directly related to park support that emerged in interviews with participants are presented to further highlight topics important to park supporters. Finally, the chapter concludes with a

presentation of the similarities and differences of the three participant groups and discussion of the dimensions of park support.

## **Demographics**

Twenty-eight of the planned thirty interviews were ultimately conducted, with only interviews of park foundation donors falling short of the desired goal. This was in part due to the greater refusal rate of donors contacted via phone and the tendency for supporters contacted in park to state they were foundation donors when in fact they were members of the Yellowstone Association or not a non-profit supporter at all. Of the 28 interviewees, half of the sample was men and half women. When split into the three park support groups, only park foundation donors skewed away from the even split, with six men and two women interviewed.

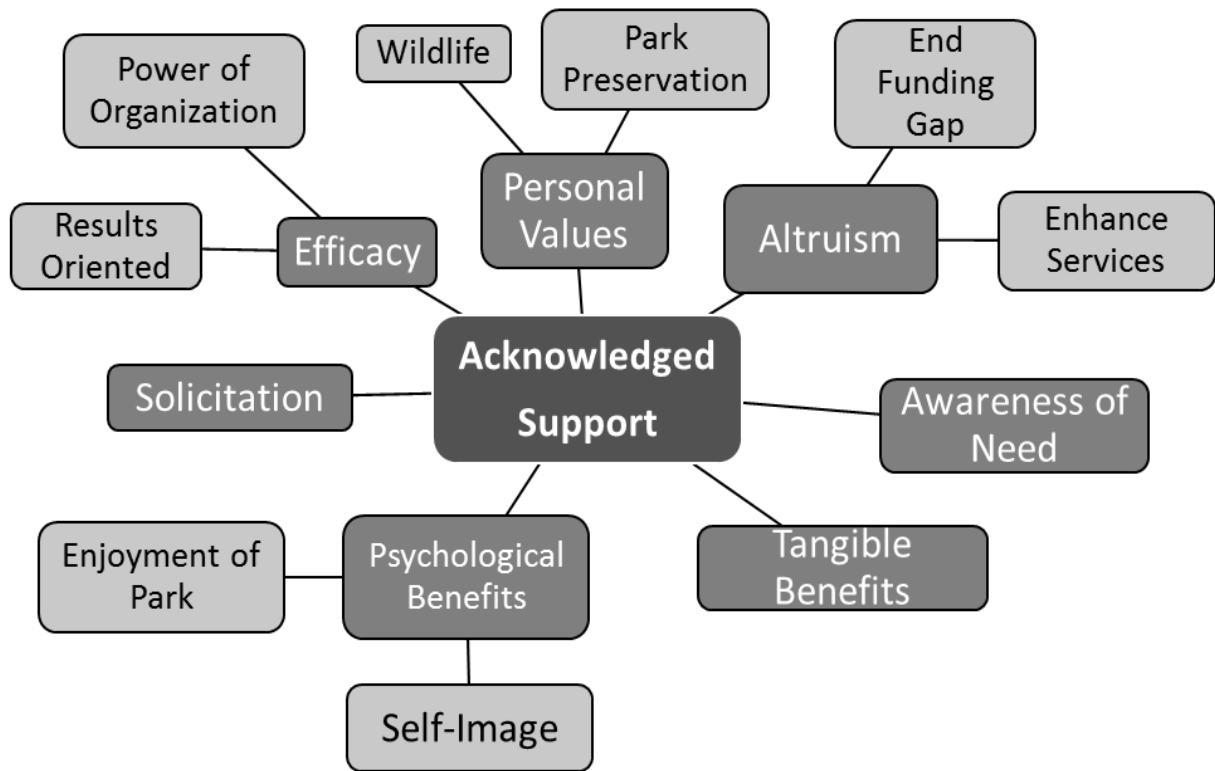
Age varied extensively among interviewees, and while not specifically examined in the interview guide, context clues allowed for an over or under 50 years old assumption to be made. Both park association members and foundation donors were likely to be older, with only three interviewees of those groups stating they were under 50 years old. In contrast, repeat visitors were evenly split in terms of age. Half reported they were retired or older than retirement age and half explained how they were younger working professionals, just beginning families, or in college.

Distance from place of residence to Yellowstone was a third item that emerged in the interview text when participants spoke about visiting the park. A mix of distances was desired for the study as local visitors were thought to have different ideas about support for the park than more distant visitors, and was achieved. Seven local (within a three to five hour drive) and 21 distant (greater than five hours away) supporters were interviewed and provided a wide range of comments about how this distance affected their relationship with the park.

## **A Guide to Park Support**

For this study, both types of, and reasons for, park support were initially categorized as either direct or indirect support, in line with Jorgenson and Nickerson's (2014) definition of park support. However, during analysis, a trend emerged in that these definitions did not fully describe the support actions being discussed. To further allow nuances in study results, types and reasons for support have been separated and redefined as either Acknowledged support (actions that resulted in some response from the park or a non-profit) and Unrecognized support (actions that were not acknowledged by the park or non-profits). Unrecognized support was further divided into direct and indirect categories depending on the effect of a given action. To aid in understanding this subject matter, Figures 1 and 2 are provided as a guide that can be referenced throughout the following two chapters. This figure addresses both types of, and reasons for, support within unrecognized and acknowledged support actions.

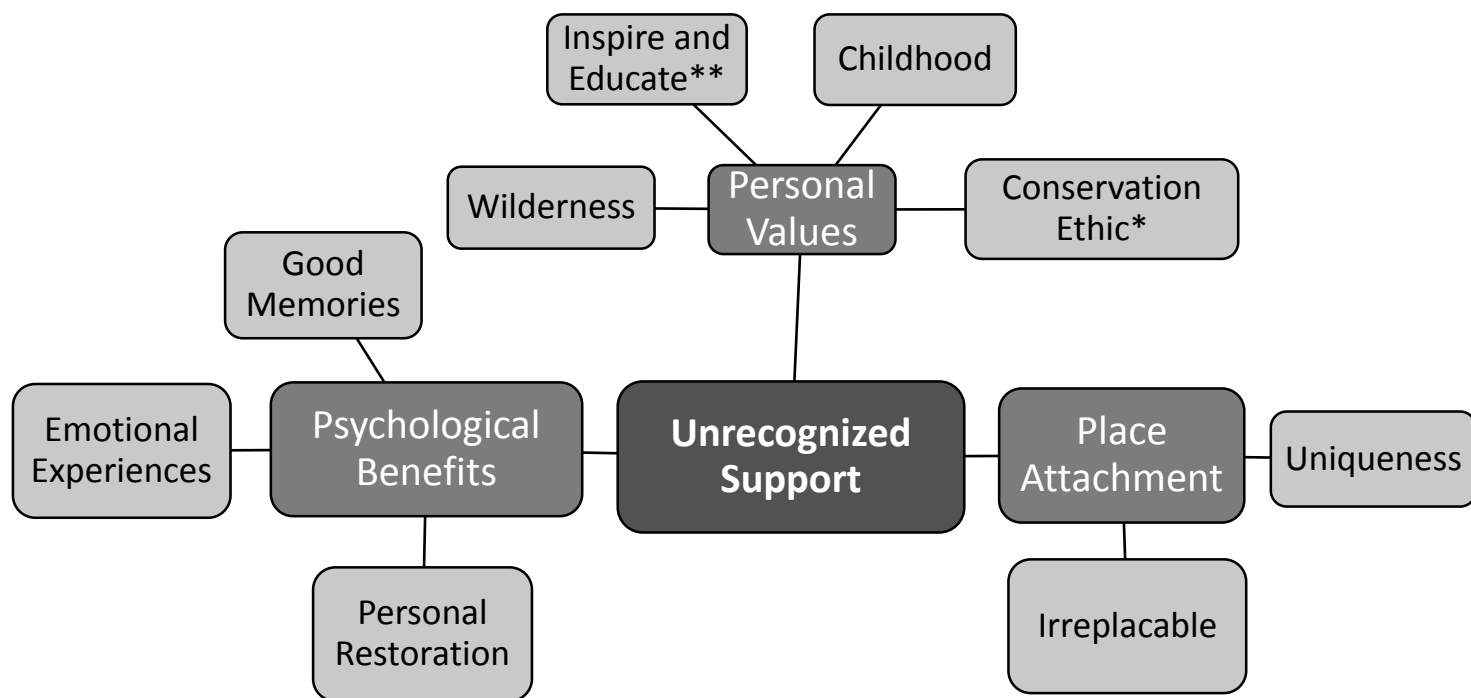
**Figure 1: Reasons for Acknowledged Park Support**



**Acknowledged Support includes the following actions:** Monetary Donations, Volunteering at Yellowstone, and Non-Profit Volunteering.



**Figure 2: Reasons for Unrecognized Park Support**



**Direct Unrecognized Support includes:** Visiting and Enjoying, Environmental Actions\*, Political or Issue Actions, and Educating Others\*\*.

**Indirect Unrecognized Support includes:** Sharing Experiences, Introducing Newcomers, Staying Informed, and being a Park Promoter.

\* Indicates a reason for support that was tied to specific direct unrecognized support type.

### **Dimension One: Types of Park Support**

How do visitors support Yellowstone National Park? One of the primary questions asked in the interview guide sought to answer this question among the three groups of supporters.

Participant answers to this open prompt revealed a number of different acknowledged and unrecognized support actions utilized by all three groups. Additionally, section four of the interview guide addressed sustainable tourism actions such as choice of lodging, donations to environmental causes, and introducing others to a place that also fell under acknowledged or unrecognized support categories and found that many participants also engaged in those activities. Study results found some overlap between identified and uncovered support actions

and are discussed below. Twenty-five out of the 28 participants reported engaging in acknowledged support actions, and all participants either identified or were discovered to engage in unrecognized support actions.

Over the course of the interview process, study participants identified and revealed eleven different types of actions they utilized to support the park. Table 1 contains a list of these three acknowledged and eight unrecognized support actions and the number of those interviewed who reported undertaking that type of park support. It is important to note that all participants utilized multiple support behaviors (four to five support behaviors on average), and as such, a given support action is only one part of a participants total park support.

Additionally, all participants were asked and reported engaging in some form of community support for the towns surrounding Yellowstone. This almost unanimously took the form of tourism dollars spent in the community, something that might indirectly support the park itself. Since it is unknown if purchases in a gateway community end up supporting the park in some manner, it is not included in Table One. Community support is discussed at the end of the direct support section.

**Table 1: Types of Support taken by YA, YPF, and RV**

<b>Support Type</b>	<b>YA Supporters (10)</b>	<b>YPF Supporters (8)</b>	<b>Repeat Visitors (10)</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>1. Sharing Experiences</b>	9	8	10	27
<b>2. Introducing New Visitors</b>	7	7	9	23
<b>3. Park Monetary Contributions* (YA &amp; YPF)</b>	10	8	4	22
<b>4. Staying Informed</b>	8	3	5	16
<b>5. Park Promoter</b>	3	2	7	12
<b>6. Visiting and Enjoying Park</b>	2	1	5	8
<b>7. Educating Others</b>	1	3	3	7
<b>8. Environmental Actions</b>	3	1	3	7
<b>9. Political or Issue Actions</b>	0	2	0	2
<b>10. Soliciting other Donations*</b>	0	2	0	2
<b>11. Volunteering*</b>	1	1	0	2

\*Acknowledged Support includes donations to YA, YPF and volunteering

### **Acknowledged Support**

Acknowledged support for the park took several different forms, and was typically philanthropic in nature. For Foundation donors and Association members, the action referenced most often by participants was that of direct monetary contribution to the non-profits in which they belonged. While other types of acknowledged support, such as volunteering for the park or its partnering non-profits, and soliciting donations from others were also identified, monetary action was the only acknowledged support action that was *commonly* identified by participants among all three groups.

### ***Monetary Support***

Monetary actions were largely identified by participant when asked how they supported the park. Non-profit supporters commonly identified their affiliation to the YA, YPF, or both groups, and typically went on to describe what exactly that affiliation involved. Most Association members identified purchasing memberships, while Foundation donors identified more varied giving types including direct donations, percentage deals, and funds dedicated in their wills.

Steven (YPF): Well, it's not significant but it's a reasonable amount of money that we contribute every year to the Yellowstone Foundation in support of the wolf project. We support it at a level of over \$2,500 a year. That is sort of the minimum amount that we established to support the wolf program. But then we also provide some money to support Rick McIntyre, his work out at the Lamar Valley.

Steven, a contributor to the Park Foundation's wolf program exemplified how a majority of monetary donors described their contribution to one of the two organizations. Like most participants, he only began talking about his support for the project when prompted by the interview question and identified how he viewed his contribution along with what that contribution was. Unlike the majority of monetary supporters, Steven went on to give a specific monetary amount. Most YA members and YPF donors limited themselves to stating they had

bought a membership or made a donation, at most using terms like ‘modest or significant’ in regards to monetary amounts. All but Steven and one other participant avoided providing specific dollar amounts.

A degree of overlap existed in non-profit supporters, with several participants identifying support for both the YA and YPF. Support for both non-profits was mixed, with some participants strongly supporting one non-profit over the other and others supporting both on a more equal basis. Types of support for the secondary non-profit were commonly donations such as Yellowstone Institute (YI) Class costs, YA memberships, and YPF donation box contributions.

Lauren (YA): Oh, well, we’ve been a Yellowstone Association member for the last 8 years and we’ve also been a member of the Yellowstone (Park Foundation). Yeah. So we’ve been a member of the park foundation for 1 year but for the association we’ve been a member for about 8 years.

Similar to Lauren, most of these joint non-profit supporters had been involved with the primary organization for a longer period of time, and had only become aware of and started supporting the other non-profit more recently. Additionally, a few repeat visitors also reported engaging in monetary support. Specific donation types varied among these participants, with Yellowstone Association bookstore purchases and annual national park passes cited as common ways they helped support the park. Several supporters remembered providing donations while visiting Yellowstone in the past, but could not remember the specific cause they gave to. Context clues indicated that these mystery donations were most likely made to the YPF or YA. Taylor was typical of this small group of repeat visitors, bringing up her pass purchase and involvement with YA bookstores when prompted about support she provided for the park. Generally this group talked solely about monetary support during the open ended prompt, only going into other support actions later in the interview when asked about specific actions.

Taylor (RV): I guess [we support the park] economically by buying our park passes or annual passes. We always go into the association’s bookstores or the ranger station

bookstores and buy stuff, if it's that kind of support.

### ***Non-Monetary Acknowledged Support***

Non-monetary acknowledged support typically took the form of volunteering in the park or for a partnering non-profit and also included soliciting donations from others. These actions were more likely to be utilized by specific participant groups and were fewer in number than monetary actions. Only two actual volunteers for Yellowstone National Park itself were among participants. Unlike the other forms of acknowledged support for the park, volunteerism was not identified by participants when asked about ways they supported the park, but rather when the topic came up in the 'established support list' later in the interview.

Emily (YA): In the early 2000s, I was a volunteer for four seasons in a row and then I came back here [home] for family reasons... That was really cool. I volunteered for the park archeologist, the park photographer, the park cultural anthropologist, that was really, really fun. I mean, I would love to volunteer more often.

Emily, an Association and Foundation joint-supporter was one of the two park volunteers. When prompted about volunteering, she described the work she had done with various branches of the park staff. In contrast to Emily, the majority of participants indicated they did not have the time or ability to volunteer with the park. However a few participants, like Ann, did suggest that volunteering in the future was a possibility that they might look into. Most of these comments indicated that something needed to happen (retirement, convincing of a spouse, health improvement) before the participant could really look into volunteering.

Ann (YA): I talked to my husband about that, hey, let's go up there and spend the summer and do volunteer work and then work there and then have the time to take off and see other aspects [of the park] that we've not been able to see before. I haven't talked him into that yet.

Of all the ways of supporting the park, volunteering for the park was perhaps the least participated in activity. Volunteerism with the park non-profits was another type of support that was undertaken in by just a few participants. Frank and Kellie represented one aspect of this

volunteerism, and described their efforts in time and travel while soliciting donations for the YPF as part of being on the board of that organization. Other participants described their involvement in volunteering to work at the bookstores in the park for a summer.

I: How often do you volunteer time with Yellowstone?

Frank: Constantly.

Kellie (YPF): All the time through the park foundation. Yeah, we've got a capital campaign going on, trying to raise \$40 million through the park over 5 years. You probably heard or you may not have – Yellowstone Park Foundation is looking at merging. And that has required an inordinate amount of time. With the campaign, we travel and solicit contributions or pledges and so it's a busy time.

### ***Community Support***

Another support question asked participants about support for the local communities around Yellowstone to gauge support for the area as a whole. Topics such as lodging, meal expenses, and the purchase of souvenirs were common specific examples, and more generally fell under the broad label of tourism spending. These participants spent money because they needed or wanted various goods and supplies while on vacation and by definition was not philanthropic in nature, as private money was spent on private goods. Responses to this question were largely the same among all the participants, and Lily's response about choice of lodging, travel, and souvenir purchases are typical of the group.

Lily (RV): Because we always stay in a place like Silver Gate or Cooke City or inside the park or even in Jackson Hole. Of course we fly into there, so that supports that town too. Or go out to visit Cody or any of those, Mammoth Springs, just any of the communities around it. Especially since we fly, we have to purchase everything. I think that's one way we do too. Bringing things back for our kids and us.

In contrast to the majority of participants, a few talked specifically about buying locally in the Yellowstone area on purpose. These few shoppers made sure to buy from gateway communities and even when living near the park, would make purchases before going home to help support the local economy. Julia, a repeat visitor who lived in nearby Bozeman Montana spoke about the importance of making those local purchases, and like others, explained how she

went out of her way to ensure she was providing that support despite (in her case) being able to go home at the end of the day.

Julia (RV): Every space is going to have a tourist spot. I mean Gardiner wouldn't exist without the park. West Yellowstone barely exists anyway with the park. I mean, they don't hardly have a school. But, being ok to share in that economy. I lived in Bozeman such that it was close enough for me to go home. And we would always still go get huckleberry milkshakes in Gardiner. We would go to the West Yellowstone Campgrounds rather than the park. We did a little bit of state ground, but always tried to find something related to the town.

### **Unrecognized Support**

Park supporters revealed a broad range of less concretely measurable actions they undertook to support the park that were initially categorized as both direct and indirect support. These actions were those that were not acknowledged by the park or a partnering organization as support, and thus were categorized as unrecognized support, or support that is occurring but is not recognized. Actions such as sharing experiences, introducing newcomers, visiting, political or issue based advocacy, performing environmental actions, and staying informed about Yellowstone issues were some of the most common ways that all three groups of interviewees participated in unrecognized support. Such actions were identified in two different sections of the interview, the direct prompt that asked participants how they supported the park, as well as the section of the interview that examined previously discovered support actions.

Unrecognized support actions that emerged in the interviews were classified as direct or indirect based on how they arose during interviews. Those supporters who utilized direct Unrecognized actions recognized what they were doing (by visiting, educating the broader world about Yellowstone, performing environmental actions, and being involved in political or resource issues concerning the park). In contrast, other participants who only spoke about indirect Unrecognized actions (such as sharing experiences, introducing newcomers, promoting the park and staying informed about Yellowstone issues) when prompted, often did not relate such

activities to park support.

### ***Direct Unrecognized Support***

Direct Unrecognized support actions were ways unmeasurable by quantifiable means that park supporters could give something back to Yellowstone. These actions commonly took the form of visiting the park, educating others about Yellowstone, performing environmental actions in the park, and serving as an advocate for park issues. Several interviewees cited educating others about Yellowstone more generally. Comments about education most commonly occurred when discussing how a participant supported the park.

Alyssa (RV): But from an education standpoint, when I do my educational programs here [at home] about red wolves, I don't just talk about red wolves. We talk about wild places. And we have a lot of refuge properties here but I also talk about Yellowstone and why it is important that we have places like that, not only for animals but for people.

Educators like Alyssa fell into one of several categories, school teachers, non-profit staff members, and informal educators. These participants brought Yellowstone in as a classroom example of a subject being studied, in programmatic contexts during events they were working, and informally when sharing information about specific programs and trying to convey the importance of the parks to others.

Furthermore, a few Foundation donors noted political or issue advocacy as a form of support. One possible reason for this is due to the project-specific nature of the YPF, where donors have a great deal of control where and how their money is used. These donors were often deeply involved with and attached to the specific project they supported, both in Yellowstone and in the broader world and were motivated to go beyond monetary action alone to support those issues and park as a whole. Eric described his involvement in responding to management open comment periods and like the others, who engaged in similar activities, related his involvement back to causes that he was passionate about, in this case native fish restoration. Other topics that



were mentioned in this context included wilderness and general park funding support.

Eric (YPF): We often voice our opinion on management questions and things like that. For example, they just opened comments on whether brook trout should be killed in the Cooke City area, the Lamar drainage, to allow native cutthroats to come back, stuff like that. So you can comment on these things on the Internet. And I make my voice heard through organizations like Trout Unlimited.

Environmental actions that supported the park were reported by a few participants from each group. Emerging from the open ended support question, participants explained that by following park rules, picking up litter, and trying to limit their personal impact on the park they were helping care for park resources and preserve it for future generations. While environmental actions were very individualistic, Olivia's thoughts about utilizing a Leave No Trace ethic in the park provides an example of the kind of activities that were undertaken in this theme. She, and other environmental supporters brought up these types of support actions when addressing the question of how support was provided. Each of those mentioning the theme provided a different emphasis on the importance of this type of action. Olivia included her description of environmental support as an important part of how she supported the park, while others in this category included such actions as more of an afterthought.

Olivia (RV): I also think I support the park by doing the whole leave-no-trace kind of thing. By making sure that I don't vandalize either the property and that I keep my trash out of there and that I'm respectful, that I'm attentive and respectful to the animals and their moments and to the other people in the park.

A final action that fell into the direct unrecognized support category was that of visitation. Several participants, particularly those in the repeat visitor group, noted that one of the biggest ways they supported the park was by making the trip to Yellowstone to enjoy the park. Specific support derived from this action was described as either monetary (via entrance fees) or as enjoyment (indirect support). Hannah, a yearly visitor to Yellowstone represented repeat visitors in this regard when talking about ways she helped support the park. She noted both the

frequency of her visits as well as all of the people that they had introduced to the park as an important part of the support she provided Yellowstone.

Hannah (RV): Well, our yearly visit. We travel there a lot. We've taken our family. I've taken my siblings there and we've taken our children and their children there. So we are regular visitors.

### ***Indirect Unrecognized Support***

Indirect Unrecognized support actions were those that were not identified as support actions by the study participants, but that have been labeled such by past work (Jorgenson and Nickerson, 2014; Stern, 2000) and emerged when asked specifically in the interviews. Common indirect unrecognized support actions were sharing general park experiences, introducing newcomers, promoting the park, and staying informed about park issues. Repeat visitors were the most likely to be so called 'Park Promoters', and were the most engaged in trying to bring or encourage new visitors to come to the park, though non-profit supporters also partook in such activity. These park advocates utilized pictures, recounted experiences, and provided tips on lodging, attractions, and related items and hope that their advice helped others enjoy the park as much as they did.

Hannah (RV): So I send pictures out to friends all the time and say, 'this is what we've seen, you should go check this out' when they talk about taking trips and stuff like that. People know that we are big supporters of Yellowstone so my husband and I have people contact us about how long does it take, where would you go, what would you do.

Hannah was also typical of those who actively promoted the park, and talked about the specifics of how she and her spouse advertised the park when asked about sharing experiences during the established list of support actions section of the interview. A common theme among park promoters that Hannah referenced was that of being known as a supporter by others. Others approached park promoters because they knew these supporters had the knowledge and were willing to help set up their own park experience.

Beyond encouraging and helping people travel to Yellowstone and get the most out of the experience, nearly all participants had introduced someone to the park for the first time. Who was introduced on a given visit varied widely, and newcomers ranged from immediate family to work associates. Repeat visitors again were the most likely to introduce others, with the non-profit groups also undertaking this very common behavior. Introducing others to the park was another action that most commonly came up in the established support section and consisted of a few general points. Matt, a YA member who visits Yellowstone multiple times each year to watch wildlife touched on most of these points.

Matt (YA): Oh, probably maybe once a year. They may have been there years ago but on occasion we've had people that have never been to Yellowstone so it just varies. But at least once a year we're traveling with someone else and they would like to go into the park and of course we love to go in and show it off.

When asked about introducing newcomers to the park, the frequency of the activity was commonly brought up first, and then something about who was being introduced to the park discussed. Enjoying the experience of introducing someone new to the park was also common. A final point that Matt did not touch on was the reaction of the person introduced to the park, usually a positive response to the experience.

When asked how often they shared experiences, most participants explained that they frequently talked about Yellowstone with friends, family, and coworkers as well as shared pictures and stories on social media. Sharing these experiences was one support action both recognized as support by a few participants but more commonly not identified as support by them. As such it has been categorized as indirect due to the greater number of participants who did not identify it as support (but still did it). The way experiences were shared ranged widely (family events, social media, scrapbooking, work conversations, and more). Julia provided an example of a response to the question about sharing experiences, referencing how often and what

specifically she does to share her experiences in the park. Unlike most, Julia also critiqued others who did not share their experiences, reflecting her own beliefs about exploring the outdoors and more generally ‘God’s Country’.

Julia (RV): Oh I talk about Yellowstone all the time. I talk about my research all the time. Every time I see that place in a picture, or I've got a scrapbook in here of places I've gone to and why wouldn't you share that? That's selfish, so selfish for you to keep those memories to yourself. Memories are to be enjoyed and journeys are to be experienced with friends and family and loved ones. I never understood solo backpackers, because not only are you lonely, but you have no one to verify for you that you have truly found God's Country. Why would you do that? I really don't get it. (laughter)

Staying in touch with Yellowstone and remaining informed about park issues was a topic that a number of participants reported, but did not relate directly to support of the park. Visitors who wanted to stay informed about what was happening in the park as well as park issues (fish removal, wildlife updates, etc.) reported using Yellowstone’s social media, non-profit email updates, and park related websites to achieve these goals. Staying informed included such things as reading emails sent from non-profits, utilizing the park’s online media efforts, and engaging in social media concerning the park. Lauren, like many of the participants who talked about staying informed, was a long-distance visitor to the park and thus relied on these communications between visits to stay engaged with the park.

Lauren (YA): We get a newsletter from the Yellowstone Association and that usually sparks me to go on the other website. Usually, it’s updated stories on anything that’s in the park. New sightings of animals, sometimes interesting stories about tourists that maybe are not doing what they should do because – it’s just curiosity, I guess. Why people do stupid things.

Like most others who spoke about staying informed, her comments about staying informed came when asked if she had ever visited the park’s social media sites. Lauren’s comments on what information she looked for while staying informed again fits well with most others in this category. Other topics that she did not talk about included management issues and changing conditions in the park that could affect trip planning.

## **Dimension Two: Reasons for Support**

Reasons for park support varied widely among participants and specific support activities undertaken. Of the support actions discussed above, acknowledged actions were those most commonly discussed in terms of reasons for support, while unrecognized support was less discussed. This was largely due to the nature of the interview guide and how the ‘previous established support actions’ section was delivered to visitors. As such, this results section is divided to examine given reasons for specific support behaviors (acknowledged and unrecognized). The section then further examines underlying reasons for unrecognized support actions not discussed in the context of specific actions to provide a general understanding of what might motivate participants to provide these other support actions. Table 2 lists identified reasons for support given by park supporters.

### **Identified Reasons for Acknowledged Support**

A large proportion of identified reasons for support fell under the direct action of monetary support due to the nature of most study participant’s association with the YA or YPF. Discussion about reasons for support with these non-profit donors largely focused on the monetary gifts made and produced a number of explanations which have been organized into larger themes representative of Bekker and Wiepking’s mechanisms of support.

**Table 2: Identified Reasons for Support**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Repeat Visitors (10)</b>	<b>YA Supporters (10)</b>	<b>YPF Supporters (10)</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>1: Values and Interests</b>	5	7	6	18
<b>2: Awareness of Need and Altruism</b>	1	8	5	14
<b>3: Tangible Benefits</b>	2	6	3	11
<b>4: Efficacy</b>	2	4	4	10
<b>5: Psychological Benefits</b>	2	4	3	9
<b>6: Solicitation</b>	0	4	0	4

*Values and Interests*

Many Yellowstone non-profit supporters actively tied their personal values and interests into explanations of park support. Personal values emerged in response to direct queries about why support was given as well as in topics such as the importance of Yellowstone and reasons for visiting the park. Topics such as wildlife in the park and the preservation of Yellowstone for future generations were identified as ideas that park supporters held to be important enough to provide monetary support.

*Wildlife Values and Beliefs*

One of the most common valued elements of the park that led to monetary support was that of wildlife in Yellowstone. Fisherman wanting to support native species reintroduction, wolf enthusiasts, and general supporters of wildlife in natural habitats all stated how Yellowstone's involvement with those issues was a driving reason for support. Like most, Joseph spoke about his reasons for supporting the YA and YPF when asked why he was a member of the non-profits.

Joseph (YA): And, you know, if I had to pick one aspect of the Yellowstone Park Foundation, (the wolf project) that's one thing that excited me, gosh, they do such great work and they've really been a tremendous asset to the park, and it's a well-run organization that's transparent on how they spend their money and I think they do a good job. The Yellowstone Association is – they have more emphasis on education, particularly getting younger people involved, children involved early on with the park so that old

folks like us move on, there will be other people just as interested and enthusiastic about the park.

A six time visitor to the park and a photographer, Joseph identified the aspect of the park supported by each of the causes that he found to be important. In the case of the YPF, the wolf project was the most referenced individual project, with fisherman supporting native trout restoration a close second. Grizzlies were also mentioned as favorite wildlife in the park but were rarely tied to the reasons for support in a wildlife context.

### *Park Preservation*

Several other park supporters discussed how they made monetary contributions to help preserve and protect the park for future generations. These supporters valued Yellowstone as a place to be enjoyed and wanted to ensure that future generations of family and strangers alike could visit Yellowstone much as they did. Talking about the importance of visiting the park and the role her entrance fee played in helping support the park, Jessica brought up the idea of park preservation at a different place than most who talked about the topic during the specific prompt, but had much the same point to make.

Jessica (RV): It's a fabulous place and something that we're very grateful that we have and we hope that future generations take care of it and love it as much as we do.

### *Awareness of Need and Altruism*

Awareness of need and altruism are viewed as complementing mechanisms in philanthropic literature and played much the same role in the examination of acknowledged park support. Brought up by those making monetary contributions to the Association and Foundation, park supporters were made aware of the park's need for funding several different ways, and further decided to give to the non-profits to help compensate for that perceived lack of funding. Two of those interviewed that fell within this thematic area noted that they initially gave to the YA and YPF because of the nonprofit's existence or because they had surplus money to give to

the specific cause. Unlike others, these two did not cite the need to close a funding gap, enhance park services, or protect the park from outside threats.

I: So what was it that inspired you to join the YA?

Alex (YA): Because it's there.

Amy (YPF): (I donated) Mostly because I could afford it.

A number of park supporters reported a personal awareness of need that incited altruistic support behavior. For park support this often took the form of wanting to prevent closures or make up for a specific lack of funds. A YA member, Katherine generally represented those who brought up awareness of need. Like many, she expressed a worry that if no action was taken to help, parks would start being shut down. However, she differed from the majority in citing a specific event that made her aware of the funding need. Awareness of a need was always addressed when participants were asked about what had motivated them to support one of the non-profits.

Katherine (YA): (I joined because of) the shutdown. Back seven years ago, they were talking shut downs of the national park. And if we don't support them, they're going to shut them down.

Several other participants noted that beyond their awareness of a lack of funding, they hoped or believed their contributions would help the park service enhance services in Yellowstone. Two of the three park supporters who spoke about this facet were similar to Riley, who works as a park concessionaire employee. The few participants who utilized this reasoning were low level donors, who spoke about the power of numbers in philanthropy making a difference when talking about their reasons for support.

Riley (YA): We are pretty sensitive to the idea that national parks are in the public sector. They're totally funded by the US Government and they're pretty low on the food chain, pretty far down the ladder. So even though we don't contribute a lot, hopefully there's a lot of us that are contributing so that they can enhance what the national parks service is able to do with their extra funding.



Finally, a single higher level YPF donor, Ian, cited awareness of need in an environmental context. This support noted the risks of resource extraction and development to the park. While not the only one to raise concerns of development in the park itself, others who noted such concerns did not relate the idea to reasons for support directly, citing it more as a general concern.

Ian (YPF): Well, I think our national park system is a unique gem in the country. I think that it's always constantly at risk from development and mining interests and gas and oil exploration interests.

### ***Tangible Benefits***

Park supporters from all three participant groups referenced tangible benefits that influenced their decision to give. These measurable benefits included perks such as discounts on bookstore purchases, thank you gifts, park update letters, classes, and more. Due to its nature as a 'reward' for donations, most participants who fell under this category were non-profit monetary donors. Steven provided a unique example of an impactful thank you gift when talking about the specifics of giving larger gifts to the wolf tracking program. Most other thank you gifts referenced were more mundane such as thank you letters, discounts to park stores, and mailings from park staff members.

Steven (YPF): And then when that wolf died – this is incredible – they would send you the collar. Well, about the only good thing the collar was good for was you could put it outside and it would keep the cats away. Okay. They'd get a whiff of that, it's the last thing we want – and I'm being fictitious there – but we ended up with like 4 or 5 collars. They just stink like crazy. But it was a little gesture on their part.

Educational programming provided by the Yellowstone Association was another benefit that all three participant groups cited as a reason for support. YA members were the most prolific class-takers but since such classes are open to all who might be interested, all three groups of participants contained at least one class taker or someone who wanted to take a class in the future. Matt was typical of most, referencing his pre-existing interest in a class topic that he

wanted to learn more about. Others also indicated excitement in the fact that these classes were enabling them to see or learn something they would not otherwise have been able to on their visit.

Matt (YA): Well, I'd seen some of the stuff that they're talking about. I guess I must have found interest on the Internet and I saw several of the kind of get-togethers where they would spend X amount of dollars and go through a workshop with you on wolves.

The quality of YA bookstores was another reason for support that was brought up by two park supporters. The bookstores were viewed as a benefit to the park due to their educational nature, less commercial products and the effect that they could have on the people who visited them. Ryan's long involvement with Yellowstone and the park non-profits were unique, but his thoughts about the bookstores were representative of the people who talked about the benefits of the shops. Others who mentioned the bookstores tended to mention specific aspects, such as the non-commercialized nature of the items and the educational mission of such stores.

Ryan (YPF): The primary reason is that I appreciate the stores and the books about the park and the ability of the people to get them.

### ***Efficacy***

The perception and confirmation that monetary support was being put to good use was another important reason for giving stated by non-profit supporters. Past success of the non-profits, perceived power of the organization, and ability to give money to specific causes were all topics of discussion within this theme. Current and former Association members discussed how by paying membership fees they were not only providing monetary support, but also joining a larger group of voices that served as a national advocate for the park. Though she had only been to the park twice, Ann's thoughts about embodiment or representation were echoed by others who wanted to become a part of a group that could serve the park on a national scale. Such topics commonly arose out of the prompt about reasons for supporting the park non-profits.

Ann (YA): I had heard that there's a larger organization that would also embody Yellowstone that should have a membership and maybe have access to the other park systems. That was my primary reason.

Most YPF supporters noted that their monetary support actions were results oriented.

Comments were divided into two subthemes, direction of funds to support particular projects that supporters valued and perceptions that their gifts were making a difference. These donors wanted to see results, either prior to giving to ensure their money was not going to waste, or after giving to ensure that their gift was having an effect on the particular cause in which they contributed.

An avid fly fisherman and frequent local visitor to the park, Robert spoke about the process that led to his park foundation donations and the research he did to ensure his gift was not going to waste.

Robert (YPF): Because I visited it for fishing purposes for many, many years, decades, I personally could observe the decline in the cutthroat population before it became a news item that was being covered. And when we moved back to Montana and I learned that the Yellowstone Park Foundation was an equal partner with the park in the effort to reduce the lake trout population, I learned more about that to make sure it appeared as though it might have some chance of success. And once became convinced of that, then we decided to be in support of it.

The ability to choose that specific project was also noted as something that helped drive giving. Kellie spoke for most of the YPF donors as well as several YA members when talking about being able to give to what they were most passionate about, in this case the wolf program.

Kellie (YPF): And I think the primary reason that we chose the park foundation is because we can designate where our gift goes and support not only what we like to support, primarily the wolf project there, but what the park deems are their priority projects. And so most of the money that YPF raises goes back to the park directly, and that's the way we like to see it done.

### ***Psychological Benefits***

Several park supporters discussed providing support for Yellowstone in the context of psychological benefits. These mental benefits took two distinct forms, one associated with giving

because of enjoyment of Yellowstone and the other associated with the effect of giving on a supporter's self-image. Enjoyment of what the park gave visitors in terms of experiences and memories was a common refrain that came up in many interviews. However, only two of those participants directly tied those feelings of enjoyment into their rationale of wanting to give back to the park via donation. Again responding to the open prompt about reasons for support, Eric cited what the park had given to him and his family and identified an emotional attachment that helped him make the decision to give back.

Eric (YPF): So we just figured we'd gotten so much out of the park that we'd like to eventually give back to it in a financial way. We just love it. I mean, we, in our will, recognized any number of interests, for example, the park is one of them because it's enriched our lives.

When discussing their reasons for giving a few other non-profit donors noted how the giving process affected their self-image in some way. The interviewees, like Alex, described feelings of pride and how giving made them feel good. Like those who noted giving due to enjoyment, these participants also noted close ties to Yellowstone as a meaningful place.

Alex (YA): Probably the most important reason it made me feel good. It was some small away that I could give back to these places that were so meaningful to me.

### ***Solicitation***

Several YA donors discussed aspects of solicitation that helped them make the decision to give to the Association and the park. These requests for donations took the form of interactions with staff in the YA's bookstores, and the general visibility the non-profit has in the park due to the location of those bookstores within park visitor centers. Of these four interviewees, three noted the bookstores specifically and one heard about it through a (probable) staff member within a visitor center. A single supporter (Sophie) explained that it was in the store that she ultimately made the decision to give, while the others indicated more of a gradual exposure to the Association. Reflecting on her connection to the park via family tradition, Sophie described

how solicitation and her personal family connection to the park (being a third generation visitor) combined to make the decision to give in that moment. In this regard, Sophie was unique to those who mentioned solicitation, as the other participants simply stated they had made the decision to give while in the store, providing little other background.

Sophie (YA): But I kind of took everything for granted. And I felt like when I was shopping in the store and they were telling me about it, I thought, you know, if someone like me who has connections to it doesn't do it, why should I expect other people to do it? (It) just kind of hit me like a big brick when I was standing in the middle of the store looking at their postcards and it was a really neat store and I thought, you know what, I need to join this organization so I did.

### **Identified Reasons for Unrecognized Support**

Participants were much less likely to discuss reasons for the varied types of unrecognized support due to the nature of the interview guide. However supporters who reported educating others as a form of support or who performed environmental actions while visiting Yellowstone did discuss reasons for these forms of support. Similar to acknowledged support, values again played an important role in these actions.

### ***Reasons for Educational Support***

Those participants who discussed educating others about Yellowstone in general or about park specific issues most often highlighted personal values and interests driving their actions. Supporters wanted to share the opportunities the park offered and also saw the park as a valuable teaching tool for their students, hoping its use in an educational setting would have a positive learning outcome. Educators like Amy often spoke about their efforts to teach about the park when asked about how they shared experiences in the park. She and several others presented the park in a more informal educational setting while a few other participants purposefully worked Yellowstone into lesson plans and education goals.

Amy (YPF): Sometimes I talk with my students because I live in rural Appalachia, and

they are not great travelers. They seem to be very place bound. So I do what I can to think that maybe they'll get curious about somewhere else.

### ***Identified Reasons for Environmental Support***

Park supporters who reported engaging in environmental actions also discussed values and interests as the leading reason for this support. Topics such as responsibility, respect for surroundings, and support for clean energy were discussed by park supporters as reasons for picking up litter, making lodging choices, following park rules, and practicing Leave No Trace (LNT) rules. A very individualist support action, each of the participants had different reasons for providing environmental support. Chloe, a first time Yellowstone visitor talked about her reasons for respecting the natural setting without prompting, during the open ended prompt about types of support. She extensively described what she saw in the park and why it was important and beautiful when talking about her trip, and hoped that this type of support would enable others to enjoy it just as much in the future.

Chloe (YA): I think it's important just to let people know about it and to talk about how important it is to respect the animals and all of it, I mean, the wildlife and the flowers – not to pick the flowers, just enjoy them, just everything that's there, not to do anything to disturb the terrain or any of that kind of stuff.

### **Additional Influences on Support: Positive and Negative**

Throughout the course of interviews, a number of additional topics and issues emerged from the open-ended questions posed to participants. Some of these talking points, such as positive memories and certain emotions have been linked to philanthropic support in the past but were not connected with specific support by participants. Several others have not been mentioned in past work, but given the context of the interview are likely to positively or negatively influence park visitors in regards to the decision to give. Figure 3 provides a graphic example of topics that could aid and harm support.as a guide to the following section.

**Figure 3: Additional Influences on Support: Positive and Negative**



### **Topics that Could Aid Support**

Subjects referenced by participants that aid support consisted of experiences, emotions, dependence, attachment, and personal interests. Within these topics there was frequently a great deal of overlap, and if one topic could be considered an overlying guide to them, it would be that of attachment. Place attachment has been commonly broken down by scholars into themes of place identity and place dependence, both of which are touched upon by the topics brought up by participants. As such, dependence on the park, its uniqueness, experiences in Yellowstone, and emotions, are examined in connection to place attachment while personal interests are examined separately.

### **Place Attachment**

An emerging trend from conversations with park supporters was how attached they were to Yellowstone as a place. Supporters came from all over the country and as such had a wide range of barriers (distance, income, free time, etc.) that could prevent them from visiting the park altogether and instead visit a closer natural area. Despite such barriers several participants from each of the groups discussed how Yellowstone was irreplaceable to them, was a special place emotionally, was a unique place geographically, and had changed them in some way.

### ***Irreplaceable***

When asked about other locations that participants visited to recreate, several participants of the study indicated that while they went to other locations, Yellowstone stood above the rest or in a few cases was irreplaceable. Of this latter group, participants like Matt noted that the park was the only place that they could participate in various activities like wolf watching.

Matt (YA): I live in Utah, and there's nowhere that I can get that kind of experience in Utah, at least not for the wildlife that I care about the most, which is the wolves and the grizzlies. The first 3 or 4 years that they reintroduced the wolves, I was up there even more frequently than 6 or 7 times a year.



Similarly, Hannah spoke for those of the opinion that Yellowstone was such a special place that stood above all other parks. Talking about her latest trip to Yellowstone, she noted that her family visits the park once a year from a neighboring state to watch wildlife, take in the scenery, and see the diverse group of people the park attracts.

Hannah (RV): We thought last year we'd take a road trip and we went to Nauvoo, Illinois and we went to Mount Rushmore and we thought since we had done so much driving we wouldn't go to Yellowstone, and typically we go to Yellowstone around our anniversary, so every June. Last year we decided we wouldn't go. But by August we both missed it so much that we went anyway. We ended up planning a trip in August and went. It's just such a beautiful place. Good memories.

### ***Uniqueness***

When discussing the importance of Yellowstone and why they visited the park, several park supporters from each group also brought up the idea of the park's uniqueness as something that was relevant and important. The majority of comments focused on the belief that Yellowstone's features stood out because of their rarity. Wildlife not often seen elsewhere, its geothermal hotspot qualities, and the protected nature of the park all were identified as unique qualities of the park. Connor brought up the idea of uniqueness when talking about the importance of Yellowstone. Like most who mentioned the idea, he noted Yellowstone's status as one of a kind, and further touched on the fact that it's open for anyone to come and visit.

Connor (YPF): And so, yeah, it's just important because it's one of the last – big natural areas that's pretty unique in the world actually and it's protected and it's open to everybody to come and look at and enjoy.

### ***Transformative Experiences***

Labeled as one of the goals in the Revisiting Leopold Report (2012) Transformative experiences were defined as being extremely varied but, "Are considered to be those events, either planned or unplanned, that lead to a change in an individual, either behaviorally, psychologically, or emotionally." In line with Revisiting Leopold, participants described a

variety of experiences that fit the criteria and helped alter an interviewee's life in some way. The most common topic for such experiences were wildlife encounters, although shared family experiences in the park and coming of age stories were also present. The prompt about the importance of Yellowstone brought Eric to talk about how he and his wife viewed the park as home. Asked to further explain the idea, he spoke about the moment that he and his wife realized they were attached to the place so much that it was a key part of their lives.

Eric (YPF): We were just standing knee deep in the Soda Butte River and she just looked around and I saw a little tear go down her cheek and I said are you okay? And she said absolutely. I just love it. She had come home. And it's funny she – like I said, she choked up a little bit and we were with a fishing guide and he said don't be embarrassed, you're not the only one who feels that way. Lots of people feel that way when they come to the park.

In contrast to the immediate transformative moment, Riley spoke about several summers in the park during his childhood and the importance that Yellowstone held in his life. Spanning from a question of what he remembered from his first stint as a park concessionaire, he talked at length about the importance of responsibility, the people he met, and advancing his relationship with his wife. It was these early transformative moments that led him and his wife to return to the park after retirement to work again in Yellowstone.

Riley (YA): Well, my Yellowstone experience came at a very pivotal time of my life because I was struggling to shake off being a teenager, trying to become an adult. And so here I was thrust into this activity where I was away from home. I had to work hard hours, long physical labor sometimes. And it had a lot to do with shaping my adult life. I've worked for some very inspirational people. Not only for but also with. And I also married my wife up here so that's another reason why Yellowstone is special. My wife works at the same place where her first job was. And we were married at the Lake Lodge and that's where she works. So last year we got to stand in the exact same spot we had been married 50 years earlier.

### ***Emotions***

Talking about the park also brought forth a wide range of emotions from interviewees. Supporters most commonly talked about love, amazement, wonder, and sadness, along with less

frequent feelings such as surprise, anger, and worry. Emotional comments about the park were present in every part of the interview process, and were particularly prominent when talking about the importance of Yellowstone and memories of the park.

Nearly every participant talked about love of the park, particular places, or features at some point during the interview. Most were general expressions of attachment to the place, though one comment dealt directly with an experience where the participant identified the exact moment when an emotional attachment occurred. Talking about love for the park occurred all over interviews and was addressed in multiple topics. Julia talked about her emotional connection to Yellowstone several times, and was unique in that when asked if she had any final thoughts about the park, she closed with a reflection on the park as a loved place.

Julia (RV): I don't know. I absolutely love that place and the area around it. And it's why I think Bozeman is home, it's because of the park. It's because I want to be in a place like that forever. So I just have a lot of love in my heart right now and a big smile on my face.

### **Personal Interests**

A number of personal interests were discussed in the context of Yellowstone, but were not tied directly to reasons for park support. Personal interests were typically related to Yellowstone specifically or the outdoors more generally and emerged primarily from discussion of the importance of Yellowstone as well as questions on why supporters visited the park at all. Specific interests included such ideas as conservation, childhood behaviors, Yellowstone's uniqueness, and wilderness ideals.

#### *Conservation*

Comments about conservation ethics were fairly common among YA and YPF supporters and less so among repeat visitors. Most participants discussed conservation in the context of caring for the environment and being more aware of personal impacts on landscapes or being

thankful that there were people who had the foresight to set places like Yellowstone aside so they could be enjoyed in a natural state. One participant also noted how developed places that were not conserved were necessary, but painful in a way. When asked about the reasons he visited Yellowstone, Joseph mentioned his activities in the park, and then went further to highlight the conservation efforts the park focuses on. Unlike most, who brought up the topic in relationship to the importance of the park or when talking about their support for the environment, Joseph discussed how the park influenced his awareness of the environment and decision making process after a visit.

Joseph (YA): I also enjoy the whole focus on conservation. When you leave Yellowstone, you recycle more and you're more aware of the environment. I think that's a big emphasis of Yellowstone as well. What would come to mind was (how it's) important to preserve, those types of areas, and Yellowstone is important to me mainly for the emphasis on conservation.

#### *Childhood*

Several park supporters noted the role of childhood education and experiences when asked to explain environmental values and the importance of Yellowstone to them. These repeat visitors and YA members described childhood educational moments and experiences which were the beginnings of their involvement in the outdoors, environmental causes, and with Yellowstone specifically. Talking about how he became involved with the outdoors and activism with nature-based causes, Jacob noted how his active childhood had introduced him to a lifestyle of outdoor recreating and exploration. A repeat visitor, his activism was limited to broader groups like the Nature Conservancy, but his story of growing up in nature was a common theme among childhood stories.

Jacob (RV): I think that comes when I was a kid, any chance I could roam around outside. And in Minnesota, the northern half of the state there's a lot of woods and a lot water and a lot of hunting and fishing and canoeing and great lakes and – or at least Lake Superior and other things. I mean, that's just the way I like to do things. I've always been interested in fishing and hunting and hiking.

### *Value of Wilderness*

Though definitions of wilderness varied widely among park supporters, participants from each of the three groups all discussed the value of Yellowstone as a wild place. Definition and perception of what wilderness was varied among the three groups of supporters. Repeat visitors were least likely to define wilderness in line with the federal designation, “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” In contrast, Association and Foundation supporters seemed to be more aligned with the official definition. Regardless of definition, all three groups recognized wilderness as beautiful, varied, and important. Jessica and Alex provide the two common contrasting examples of valuing wilderness. When asked why she came to Yellowstone, Jessica spoke about the park as wilderness, but as a front country motorist who mostly drives the park, more referenced to the park as a whole as a wild place rather than a specific area where only non-motorized travel was allowed.

Jessica (RV): You know, it’s just a vast wilderness. It’s incredibly beautiful. It’s different at every turn. I don’t know that I would ever in my lifetime see the whole park. It’s always a joy to come up and watch the trees grow over the years and see the tourists. That’s always a fun thing to do. It’s just a special place for us.

In contrast to those like Jessica, Alex, described himself as a fan of wilderness and during the interview described visiting delegated wilderness areas as well as putting an emphasis on solitude in such places. This knowledge of what wilderness areas are and stand for was relatively uncommon among those talking about the idea of wilderness, and more generally the term was identified as a forested, beautiful, protected area.

Alex (YA): I’m a real fan of wilderness. I recently retired and most of my vacations, even with my family as my kids were growing up, was west of the Mississippi and primarily had goals as either national parks or monuments or wilderness areas and even state parks.

### *Personal Restoration*

Getting away from the hustle of everyday life to relax and re-center themselves was an important aspect of visiting Yellowstone for a number of park supporters. These participants found restorative qualities in the peace of Yellowstone, enjoyed the difference of the natural environment, and found that they were much less stressed or rushed after a visit to the park. Talking about why she visited the park, Amy was typical of those who brought up personal restoration and gave examples of how the park restored her, describing how she behaved before and after a visit to explain how Yellowstone affected her. Others described the same effect, and used metaphors such as climbing a mountain to get a new perspective on life.

Amy (YPF): You want the really real reason? It's because I kind of re-center myself when I'm there. Well, it's sort of a reasonably short story. When I'm going into Yellowstone, I'm behind some slow driver and I go, 'How can you be going 40?' The speed limit is 45. Well, if you're only going 40, when I leave Yellowstone, I'm that slow driver. It just calms me down.

### **Topics that Could Harm Support**

In the course of the interview process, study participants also occasionally discussed topics that they viewed as harmful to either the park or the experiences they sought to enjoy in Yellowstone. The two common subjects discussed in this regard were social conditions in the park as well as emotional reactions to events that had happened in Yellowstone. While these subjects were not tied specifically to support, or even spoken about in the context of support, they were matters that affected participants and could have implications for a participant's future support for the park.

### *Negative Emotions*

Things that were identified as losses or destruction in the park were likely to evoke sadness in comments from park supporters. Wildlife deaths, fire in the park, and historic building removal were all topics that were brought up as sad events. Events that were defined as sad

frequently had a personal component to them further indicating place attachment to a specific aspect of Yellowstone. Chloe and Steven represented the general and specific nature of sadness in relationship to the park. Chloe talked extensively about her love of the beauty of Yellowstone and both the flora and fauna of the park.

Chloe (YA): It would devastate me if I saw a fire again in Yellowstone. It makes me sad to think that, you know, there's fires right now— in other places, but anything that people can do to protect it, I think we need to keep doing it.

While talking about his general involvement with the YPF and support for wolves more broadly, Steven referenced one of the worst memories he had in relationship to the park. Discussing the death of two wolves they had bought collars for, the sadness and frustration was apparent, and Steven later noted that how thank you gifts for such high level donors were changed to a more general (rather than specific wolf) information program, perhaps to avoid similar emotional reactions that could drive away donors.

Steven (YPF): And the park service actually called us up, and one of the biologists said we've got horrible news to tell you, it's bad enough that the one was killed and we just got word yesterday that 754 was shot; one in Wyoming, one in Montana. So don't get me on that subject. That was – I told my wife, I said, well, there goes \$7,500 shot to hell. I mean, just mindboggling.

A wide range of other emotions arose in interviews with park supporters but the only other one that could be related to potential harm of park support was that of anger. A few participants noted being mad at visitor behavior or when experiencing traffic jams in the park, and Matt described such a situation in talking about memories he had of the park. Having come to the park to relax, but being confronted with what he wanted to escape, a continuation of such experiences could lead to such supporters being driven away from Yellowstone.

Matt (YA): But to stop to take a photograph just starts a chain reaction (traffic jam) – that's why I go there (to Yellowstone) so I don't have to deal with people and traffic. I find myself more and more angry and my blood pressure going up instead of down.

### ***Social Conditions***

Nearly every park supporter addressed the subject of social conditions in Yellowstone during interviews, typically during prompts to describe a day in the park, the importance of Yellowstone, or when prompted to share anything else about Yellowstone at the end of the interview. For the purpose of this study, social conditions were defined as situations and environments that park supporters viewed as either desirable or undesirable in regards to use of the park. Social conditions that were noted by park supporters included crowding, isolation, visitor behavior, and commercialization.

#### ***Crowding***

Crowding of the park during the summer visitation season was identified by all participant groups and the theme that came up most often when participants were given the final interview prompt. Reactions to this crowding were mixed, with some supporters expressing high levels of unhappiness while others reflected that it was a problem that they coped with by adjusting their visitation patterns. Supporters generally pointed out that crowding was focused around certain times and areas which they then avoided, with only two of the most upset participants proposing solutions to the problem. Talking about her typical day in Yellowstone Hannah was echoed by many participants when she noted getting up early both to better her wildlife viewing chances as well as avoiding the crowds. Others also mentioned leaving the park early to likewise avoid the worst of the crowding.

Hannah (RV): Well, we like the park best early in the morning before all the crowds get there plus that's when the animals are out. So we start about 5:30 in the morning. We like to be in the Lamar Valley so we normally are somewhere over there.

Ian summed up several other participants thoughts when he spoke about crowding in the park at the end of the interview. Many study participants had taken a trip to the park in the last two years, and spoke about the astounding lines and traffic jams that could form. Several of these



participants reflected on how much visitation had grown since they had started visiting and saw this crowding as a problem.

Ian (YPF): The other thing this year – whenever I go out, I’m almost always out on that same couple of weeks that I was there around the 15th of June. And the other thing I thought this year was it seemed like there was a tremendous amount more people there. I mean, you get the animal slowdowns, but I never had just mile upon mile backups (before).

Robert mirrored many when describing the increased summertime busyness in the park, but unlike many was more neutral in talking about his observations. Most notably, he was the only participant to talk about crowding who did not identify it as a bad thing negatively affecting Yellowstone.

Robert (YPF): Well, certainly in the summertime especially, the traffic and the crowds – the number of visitors to the park, there’s a very noticeable difference. That’s neither a good thing nor a bad thing. It is what it is. The people are using the park.

Crowding solutions proposed by two Association Members were to implement some kind of transit system to remove vehicle traffic, restrict visitation, or to increase management presence to enable better traffic flow. Alex and Matt had differing opinions on how to deal with the crowding situation in Yellowstone, with Alex proposing a transit fix to the problem and Matt a more restrictive visitation or management solution. Of the two, Alex was more understanding of the situation and realistic that change would take some time.

Alex (YA): So I know in places – this is probably offensive to a lot of people – in Zion National Park, it began to get like that and that’s a much less visited park than Yellowstone because of its location. They’ve taken to using shuttles. You can’t go anywhere in the park, other than entering the park, with an automobile. Shuttles drive everywhere, to every location, there are stopping points at trailheads, etc. in the main part of the park itself. I know there’s been discussion of this but, you know, Yellowstone and driving sort of go together as part of the American way. Eventually it needs to be considered but there should be key locations where people drive their cars, huge parking lots, and then just shuttles to take people all over the park to key places. I guess that’s my major complaint and my major long-term concern about the park itself.

Matt (YA): So they either got to limit the number of people that are in the park or they've got to do a better job in convincing people that they just can't stop in the middle of the road and start those traffic jams, because it takes hours for those things to clear up.

#### *Visitor Behavior*

In addition to comments about the multitude of visitors in the park, several park supporters also made observations about the behavior of some of these visitors. Thoughts about other visitors varied, but generally concerned violation of park rules, particularly in regards to wildlife, but also concerned how other visitors were conducting themselves and their travel while in Yellowstone. A few participants also remarked on their own behavior on recent visits compared to their first several trips into the park when they were much younger, acknowledging how their own actions had changed over the years. Talking about the importance of Yellowstone and how the park helps restore her personal balance, Alyssa observed how the majority of visitors were not getting everything they could out of the park.

Alyssa (RV): Well, they all need to take a chill pill and relax. I mean, literally driving, I was like, people, are you not on vacation? What are you in such a rush for? It's not going anywhere. You're missing things by driving so darn fast. I don't know. Different perspective...Man, I mean, slow down, you might see something. Tell the kids to put away the phones and the electronics and look out the window.

#### *Commercialization*

A few supporters from all three categories expressed worries about commercialization in the park during interviews. These participants were largely concerned about additional development inside the park itself, with one supporter more worried about potential commercialization of the park's mission. Supporters had very different bottom lines for development in the park. One participant was more accepting of additional development provided there were limited impacts while a second participant did not want to see any additional further development. A third participant wanted current restrictions on recreational activities in the park to be maintained such that the resources would not be further stressed. Comments about commercialization all originated from the end of the interview when participants were invited to

share other thoughts about the park. While they largely had the same hope that the park would avoid further development, Emily had a more positive view on work being done in the part to limit impact, while Chloe was worried about any additional roadside development ruining what made Yellowstone special.

Emily (YA): And some things have changed. It's gotten a wee bit more commercialized in a way. I mean, you have to have cell phone service. There's a lot of new building going on. Thank goodness they're trying very hard to leave as little a footprint as possible.

Chloe (YA): And I know some people complain there wasn't enough space along the roads or whatever, but I think if they did that, it would ruin it. I'm not quite sure what people want more of – people just don't want to take nature as nature. I mean, to have a whole bunch of places more than what they already have for pulling off the road I think would ruin it. I think it would be commercialized. I hope they never do that.

### **Other Supported Causes**

Other causes that Yellowstone supporters also supported were examined to understand the similarities and differences that exist when park support is compared to philanthropy more broadly. Philanthropic behavior was a near universal trait of study participants, who described support as a wide range of charitable causes for diverse reasons. Types of supported causes were divided into environmental and more general non-profit causes, and reasons for providing support were examined in a similar manner to reasons for park support, with specific themes identified as appropriate.

### **Types of Causes**

When asked about other non-profits they had supported, all three groups interviewed reported a wide range of philanthropic activity, almost universally monetary in nature. Causes supported matched to literature on the subject, with religious, educational, health care, and poverty related non-profits all being supported by participants (Table 3). Additionally, nearly half of Yellowstone supporters gave to environmental causes beyond the YA or YPF, donating to both

place specific groups (park associations and similar) and more general issue organizations (Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, and similar).

**Table 3: Other Causes Supported by Park Supporters**

	<b>Repeat Visitors</b>	<b>YA Supporters</b>	<b>YPF Supporters</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>1: Environmental</b>	3	7	6	16
<b>2: Social Justice</b>	2	3	3	8
<b>3: Educational</b>	0	1	4	5
<b>4: Faith-Based</b>	0	1	3	4
<b>5: Local Causes</b>	1	1	1	3

### *Other Environmental Causes*

Supporters from all three groups, and particularly park non-profit supporters identified a number of other place-specific environmental causes they supported. Two participants noted supporting other non-profits in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, while others reported supporting other park associations, foundations, and similar causes that they also were in the habit of visiting. Support for these types of causes was typically discussed during the open prompt about other supported non-profits or when participants were specifically asked about support for other conservation organizations. Ann's response to the conservation cause prompt was fairly typical as she identified the location as well as her involvement with the area that led to support.

Ann (YA): Well, I think in the past, I know we contributed to the park service – I don't know specifically which park – back in our 30s we used to hike in Bridger National Forest and mountain ranges and places like that, several summers we'd take the kids to Rocky Mountain National Park, I've made contributions (there).

Several participants from each group further discussed their support for more general or issue based environmental causes. These typically took the form of groups such as the Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, and other single issue groups like Trout Unlimited and the Wild

Horse Foundation. For an in-depth conversation with an issue supporter who was something other than a monetary donor, see Appendix (B). Jacob was typical of many who discussed monetary support for general environmental causes, bringing the groups up when asked about other causes he supported.

Jacob (RV): Vital Ground, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation – what’s the other one? - talk about drawing a blank. Who conserves all the property? I’ve got it right here. Look at the magazine I get every month. What is it? Nature Conservancy.

Ian differed from the majority in that he discussed non-monetary support for other environmental causes, in this case volunteering. An avid fly fisherman, his support activities in Yellowstone and in other causes were both tied to the act of fishing. This direct relation was fairly common among YPF supporters who supported single projects.

Ian (YPF): Well, I’m a life member to Trout Unlimited. I am volunteer guide at the visitor center for Wildlife Education here in the Blue Ridge, and they are a fly fishing educational organization that supports a lot of training for new and beginning fly fisherman. I have guided in the Trout Unlimited summer camp for kids and casting for recovery. And we have a new program here called Casting Carolina that’s servicing cancer survivors of all types of cancer.

### ***Non-environmental Causes***

Non-environmental causes that Yellowstone supporters donated to ran the gamut of common philanthropic organizations. Churches, educational institutions, service organizations, arts centers and museums, veterans groups, poverty assistance, disaster relief causes, and more were all discussed as causes in which supporters gave money. For in-depth excerpts with two non-monetary supporters, see Appendix (B). Madison was typical of repeat visitors to Yellowstone, in that they generally supported fewer other causes than non-profit supporters, and limited themselves to local charities or community assistance groups (such as homeless shelters).

Madison (RV): Well, we try to donate to local – like we donate to Idaho (public) television. And we have a couple other things we donate to locally.

In contrast, when asked about support for other causes Riley and Kellie both described their annual involvement with a number of different groups in several different charity types. This greater participation with philanthropy in general was common among the non-profit supporters, and provided one of the few distinct contrasts between them and repeat visitors.

Riley (YA): Well, over the years we've done all the typical ones, the local community things. Typical donation to charity groups, one was community health. Donations to private charities. What's the name of the big one that's once a year? Anyway, so over the years we have donated to the typical service organizations, charity organization. I belong to some professional organizations so I give money to those.

Kellie (YPF): The Texas Methodist Foundation, Perkins School of Theology at SMU, Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. Let's see, what else? We give to a lot of things here locally. We give to the symphony, art center, the military affairs committee, which is a nonprofit.

### **Reasons for Supporting Other Causes**

Reasons for giving to this wide range of causes were also examined, and while most of the explanations for giving were similar to reasons for Yellowstone specific giving (tangible and psychological benefits, values, awareness, altruism, etc.) some differences were uncovered. Four main themes for supporting other non-profit causes emerged in discussions with Yellowstone supporters. Themes of value-alignment, efficacy, personal connections, and altruism were explained by multiple participants as reasons for support (Table 4). Other reasons such as benefits and solicitation were also identified but by fewer supporters and are examined together at the end of the section.

**Table 4: Reasons for Other Cause Support**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Repeat Visitors (10)</b>	<b>YA Interviews (10)</b>	<b>YPF Visitors (10)</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>1: Values and Interests</b>	3	4	6	13
<b>2: Personal Connections</b>	3	4	5	12
<b>3: Efficacy</b>	3	2	4	9
<b>4: Altruism</b>	0	5	0	5
<b>5: Benefits</b>	1	2	0	3

*Values and Interests*

Similar to reasons for park support, those interviewed noted direct and indirect ties to the causes based on their value systems and interests. These cause supporters gave because they had interest in the issues supported by the non-profit, the mission of the organization matched well with their personal beliefs, or had life experiences that were in-line with that goals of those non-profits. Having already established her interest in wildlife, and particularly wolf watching during the Yellowstone specific portion of the interview, Emily brought up another wildlife organization in the other causes section. When asked to explain why she supported the cause, she went further into her beliefs about wildlife and tied those into the mission of the cause.

Emily (YA): We are interested in wolves. I'm glad to see wolves come back to Yellowstone and wolves in Minnesota are still a hot topic. I mean, the discussion happens over and over every year, and I think if we can just convince people that if you know more about them, maybe you won't be for or against them. You need to get to less extremes and try to look at the facts, which the (International) Wolf Center (in Minnesota) does. It does not advocate for or against. It just tries to get people the facts and then they also have wonderful exhibits, they also have wonderful programs that is kind of in a way like Yellowstone Association, you can take classes at the wolf center also.

Robert spoke more broadly about his support for a number of causes during the interview, and in contrast to those like Emily provided a broad explanation for his support before further tying a specific example into an aspect of his person life.

Robert (YPF): The core reason for all of them (arts, environmental, healthcare, and educational non-profits) is I believe in their mission(s). I believe in the work that they're doing. And, generally speaking, they're either water project-related or fishing-related. The Human Society because we've always had dogs and cats and things like that. We support a lot of nature-inspired organizations.

### ***Personal Connections***

Personal connections to the cause being discussed was another reason for giving that was discussed by several participants from each group. Supporters cited knowing people these organizations employed or helped, as well as identifying causes that had ties to their own careers. Several of these supporters also noted that this connection was due to experiences they had either with non-profit staff or in regards to the issue being supported. Talking about the reasons she supported United Way, Katherine was typical of some non-profit supporters in that she knew several people who were directly helped by the cause at hand. In contrast, other supporters identified more with what Chloe discussed, as she described her personal involvement with causes through work and contact with those strangers who have been helped by an organization.

Katherine (YA): Well, first off, because I have two friends that are both Eagle Scouts, and we were able to donate our money directly to the scouting program through United Way.

Chloe (YA): Well, I used to be a hospital administrator, so I'm really big into anything to do with that. I donate to all that. I also donate to protect animals, domestic animals, stop animal abuse, ASPCA, humane shelters, and I've donated like battered women's shelters and I do a lot to work with abused children.

### ***Efficacy***

Similar to reasons for supporting Yellowstone, non-profit supporters identified the efficacy of a given non-profit as reason they chose to give to other causes. Efficacy for these non-profits took two distinct forms, ensuring one's voice was heard on discussions about the issue and that a donor's gift was having a positive impact on the issue. Perhaps the most profound example of efficacy leading to greater support for a cause, was Ian's description of the difference he saw in mental health patients after using fly fishing as a treatment option.



Ian (YPF): And these were folks who had schizophrenia that was severe they were considered untreatable by the regular community mental health centers. So they referred them on to us for this program called Assertive Community Treatment Team, which was a small self-contained team that could pretty much go about helping these folks in whatever seemed to work, because nothing seemed to work. And what we found was—when I came back from the trip, I changed my approach to do all adventure-based outdoor and group activities and reduce the amount of individual one on one time I was spending with folks but increase the amount of time that they were in group activities. And part of the goal for folks – when you’re doing this with folks with schizophrenia, they’re so de-socialized that we found that this process allowed them to socialize and become more and more re-socialized.

The success that Ian had with such treatments with those patients inspired him to start similar programs as he moved from job to job and become involved with several additional groups that taught fly fishing skills and used the activity as treatment for any number of physical or mental health issues.

### ***Altruism***

Non-profit supporters placed a much greater emphasis on altruism when they discussed their support for other non-profit causes. Ideas such as helping those less fortunate in the world as well as paying forward support that they (the donors) had received in the past were both very important to supporters. Altruism typically arose in discussion about education and poverty related causes. The term paying it forward was a common one mentioned by participants when thinking about altruism in the park. Ann’s thoughts on responsibility in the context of education were echoed by most though the specific topics varied from person to person.

Ann (YA): Well, I think that you’re paying forward what’s been given to you. There’s others that have come before you that made contributions. Let’s just say one category is university. Even though, let’s just say, you pay full fare for your college education, that’s only a portion of the true cost of that education. And a portion of that is given by alumni, a portion of it is foundation, companies, whatever but to make it available and sustaining for those coming behind us, whether it’s kids or grandkids or somebody you don’t even know, you have an obligation to be that. It’s just giving back as others before have done. I just feel like, you know, we all have a responsibility. It’s not all about us. It’s when we give.

### ***Other Reasons***

Beyond the four most reported reasons for giving, those who supported other non-profits also identified several other reasons for giving that were less prevalent among participants. These included tangible and psychological benefits, and awareness of need. It must be remembered that as this was an open prompt question, others may have also felt these reasons but chose not to identify them. Other reasons were very individualistic in nature. As an example, Emily identified some of the tangible benefits that supporting the International Wolf Center could deliver, while Joseph touched on awareness of need in relationship to funding for the arts.

Emily (YA): And they have cool things like our grandson had his birthday party there, you know, at the (International) Wolf Center, and when he gets a little older, you can stay overnight, you know, have a sleepover and stuff. Cool organization.

Joseph (YA): Art, I think you should kind of support the local community, particularly in areas that aren't endowed by government very well. So that's kind of why I give to that.

### **Comparisons and Summary**

Comparing and contrasting the types of and reasons for support expressed by the three groups of park supporters with each other comprised the final aspect of nomothetic analysis for the study. Among the groups, only YA member came close to being totally represented, with emphasis on education, wildlife, and enjoying the whole park present among many participants. When examining donors to the YPF, it became quickly apparent that each donor was focused on a particular project. As this study largely examined those who supported the wolf and lake trout removal project it can only accurately represent those two subgroups. Additionally, the random process of obtaining repeat visitor participants again resulted in an exclusion of some visitor types. While wildlife watchers, photographers, and road-based visitors were accounted for, such groups as geyser enthusiasts, backcountry hikers, younger visitors, and others were missing or had only a single interview conducted. Therefore, as comparisons are made between groups, it

should be kept in mind that only these smaller sub-groups are being referred to.

Those conditions established, the participant groups had many similarities that made defining absolute differences difficult, nuances did emerge that separated repeat visitors from non-profit supporters and YA members from YPF donors. Additional analysis of similarities and differences between park support and other causes was also conducted to provide an understanding of the differences among park supporters in a greater philanthropic context. Table 5 lists the common comparisons in park support among the three groups as presented in the results chapter. These similarities and differences will be discussed in-depth in the following chapter.

In summary, support for Yellowstone National Park is a diverse and multi-faceted topic that is comprised of two major categories in acknowledged and unrecognized support actions. A majority of participants were active in both categories whether they recognized such actions as support or not. Furthermore, their reasons for providing such support were similar regardless of the type of action being undertaken, and based heavily off personal values and a connection to the park. In the following chapter, in-depth discussion and conclusions are drawn forth from the results. Implications for managers as well as future research opportunities are provided to conclude the chapter.

**Table 5: Comparison of Participants**

	<b>Repeat Visitors (10 supporters)</b>	<b>YA Supporters (10 supporters)</b>	<b>YPF Supporters (8 supporters)</b>
<b><u>Dimension 1: Type of Support.</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasional monetary support of park, often unaware where gift has gone.</li> <li>• Often shares park experiences after trips to Yellowstone.</li> <li>• Typically introduces immediate and extended family to park.</li> <li>• More likely to stay in touch with park for travel information.</li> <li>• Most likely to encourage other people to visit Yellowstone and provide travel advice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monetary supporter of the Association, usually aware of cause given to.</li> <li>• Shares park experiences frequently with friends, family, and coworkers.</li> <li>• Introduces both friends and family to park in equal numbers.</li> <li>• More likely to research park topics and use YA mailings to stay informed about park issues.</li> <li>• Encourages friends and family to visit park.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monetary supporter of Foundation, aware of specific cause supported.</li> <li>• Shares park experiences very frequently, often known for passion about Yellowstone.</li> <li>• Introduces friends, and work colleagues to park.</li> <li>• Less likely to worry about staying informed, but aware of wildlife incidents.</li> <li>• Least likely to encourage new visitors to go to Yellowstone.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Dimension 2: Reasons for Support.</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values wildlife and recognizes importance of reducing impact on park.</li> <li>• Not very aware of park needing help.</li> <li>• Buys park passes to be able to visit ‘for free’.</li> <li>• Few interested in effectiveness of supplied support.</li> <li>• Recounted many positive emotions about the park and viewed it as a place of restoration.</li> <li>• Indirectly expressed a number of personal values about conservation, the park’s uniqueness, and religion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values reducing human impacts on park, wildlife, and helping Yellowstone in general.</li> <li>• Aware of lack of funds for park, want to help fund Yellowstone to prevent closure.</li> <li>• Makes YA bookstore purchases and attends Institute classes for educational experiences in park.</li> <li>• Aware of potential merger with YPF, hopes for a more powerful and effective organization.</li> <li>• Recounted many positive emotions about the park and good memories of Yellowstone.</li> <li>• Indirectly expressed personal values such as childhood experiences, uniqueness, wilderness, and conservation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values putting funds towards projects they believe in (generally wildlife based).</li> <li>• Aware of threats to Yellowstone, lack of funds. Believes contributions to YPF are helping.</li> <li>• Made YA bookstore purchases and enjoys taking YI trips in the park.</li> <li>• Liked seeing the direct impact their gifts have on the issue they choose to support, believe they make a difference.</li> <li>• Recounted many positive emotions about the park, good memories, and viewed it as a place to gain perspective in life.</li> <li>• Indirectly expressed personal values such as conservation and uniqueness.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Dimension 3: Other Causes.</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Least likely to support other environmental causes.</li> <li>• Supported local and social justice causes.</li> <li>• Had family and friend connections to supported causes.</li> <li>• Efficacy and values both noted as important reasons for support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported other park associations and foundations as well as general environmental groups.</li> <li>• Supported faith-based, social justice, and educational.</li> <li>• Were personally involved with various causes or knew friends supported by a cause.</li> <li>• Efficacy and values both noted as important reasons for support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported more general environmental causes.</li> <li>• Supported educational, faith-based, and social justice causes.</li> <li>• Had long family or friend connections to causes, or were personally involved in those causes.</li> <li>• Efficacy and values both noted as important reasons for support.</li> </ul>

## **Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications**

This study explored the support for Yellowstone National Park among those who visited the park extensively or made contributions to the park's supporting non-profits. This was achieved by addressing four research topics. First, how participants self-identified their support for the park along with a list of previously uncovered support actions was examined. Second, the reasons for these types of support were explored. Third, other philanthropic activity undertaken by participants was examined to provide understanding of park support in a greater support context. Finally, comparisons and contrasts were identified in participant groups to better understand the differences present in park supporters.

Through an ideographic and nomothetic process; the responses of ten repeat visitors, ten Yellowstone Association members and eight Yellowstone Park Foundation Donors, were thoroughly examined in relationship to these research questions. From this study, several categories of support type, reasons for those forms of support, and other non-profit support emerged that helped answer these questions.

This chapter discusses these dimensions of park support and provides conclusions reached for the research questions under examination. It also addresses the implications of this study for both Yellowstone National Park managers, YA, and YPF staff as well as implications for the broader field of park or place support. Finally, the chapter concludes by offering suggestions for future research to further investigate themes that emerged from this study.

### **Conclusions**

The 28 interviews with park non-profit supporters and repeat visitors of five or more times revealed a rich definition and explanation of what park support was, and brought to light more support actions than were originally thought. Furthermore, the participant groups did not

cleanly separate themselves by types or reasons for support as initially proposed in the study's research questions. The interwoven nature of the groups in types and reasons for park support necessitated a shift in how the research questions for the study were stated, and while the nature of the questions remain true to the study's original goals, the text of the questions has changed to reflect the interwoven nature of park support. Questions one and two now examine the types and reasons for park support as a whole, question three remains unchanged, and question four is solely responsible for the similarities and differences between the groups.

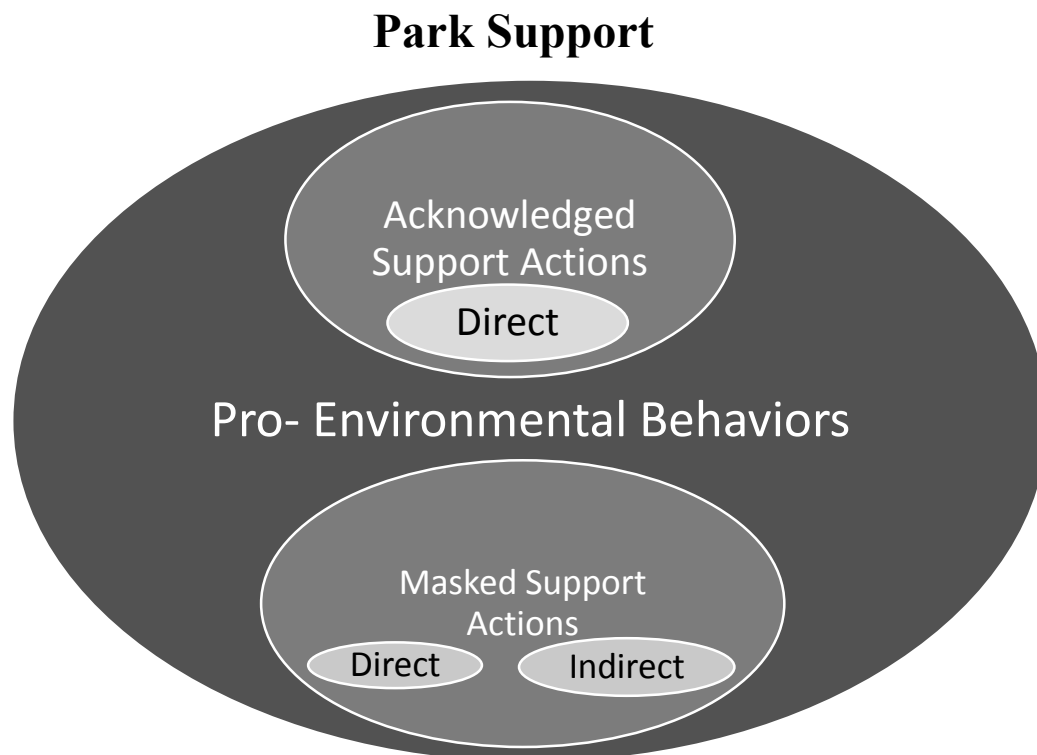
Broadly speaking, the two non-profit support groups had more similarities than they did differences, and repeat visitors did separate themselves in some ways. However, repeat visitor participants agreed with the other participant groups often enough that separation as initially proposed would have been repetitive in regards to the topics under examination. Additionally, the grouping of the non-profit organizations together as a single unit would have unrecognized some of the differences that emerged in these two groups of supporters.

During the initial planning phase of the project, support for the park was thought to be limited to primarily monetary and volunteer support, with the non-profit supporters intended to be the primary group under examination and the repeat visitors added to reveal additional forms of non-monetary support. Over the course of the project nine other support actions were uncovered and the reasons behind those forms of support were found to be diverse. Both types of and reasons for support were further intermixed such that no one group limited itself to a certain selection of types of or reasons for support. The specific conclusions that expand on these points and other pertinent findings are presented below.

**R1:** *How do Yellowstone Park Foundation donors, Yellowstone Association members, and repeat visitors support Yellowstone National Park?*

Initial analysis of the study data produced five direct and six indirect support activities that participants engaged to help support the park. The activities nominally fell under Jorgenson and Nickerson's (2014) split of park support as expected, with the addition of several support activities not directly listed in that study also emerging from the data. However, upon further analysis of the data, it was found that the types of support could more accurately be defined and categorized into two groups termed acknowledged support and unrecognized support. This categorization was the initial step in producing a holistic understanding of the types of park support to improve on Jorgenson and Nickerson's ideas of indirect and direct support. Figure 4

**Figure 4: Proposed Model of Park Support**



provides a visual depiction of the categories that specific park support actions were sorted into and further highlights that all of the actions reported by participants nominally fall into the larger

support category of pro-environmental behaviors.

This larger pro environmental behavioral category, “Actions by an individual or group that promotes or results in the sustainable use of natural resources.” (Halpenny 2010, Sivek & Hungerford 1989/1990) provided a large umbrella under which acknowledged philanthropic and unrecognized non-philanthropic support actions fit under. Using this model, opportunity exists to further refine the current definition which states: “Park support consists of direct or indirect actions taken by people exhibiting pro-environmental behaviors that assist in the preservation and livelihood of the ecological and social functions of national parks.” A further addition addressing the differences found between acknowledged and unrecognized support will more accurately define what is viewed as support by the given supporter. Regardless, this definition contrasts how Stern (2000) and Hung Lee, Jan, and Yang (2013) categorized support actions like those uncovered in the study in their work on pro-environmental behavior.

Stern’s categorization of such behaviors delineated a separation between public and private sphere activities, the former done in the view of all who wished to observe and the latter being personal actions performed for personal rather than global consumption. Hung Lee, Jan, and Yang (2013) utilized a different split of general and site specific ideas, where some PEBs were done in a global environmental context, and others performed to help preserve a specific place. This study’s findings fit closest to Hung Lee, Jan, and Yang’s idea of site specific behaviors, and Stern’s public sphere actions. Most support for Yellowstone was public in nature (donations, sharing experiences, etc.) and also mostly based directly on Yellowstone as a place, though some issue based YPF donors noted they gave more to support an idea (native fish restoration) as well as Yellowstone as a whole.

Of those activities identified as support actions, the top three utilized by all three groups



were sharing experiences, introducing new visitors to the park, and making monetary contributions. The former two were indirect Unrecognized support activities and visitation based, suggesting that supporters who undertook these activities believed that visiting the park itself is a support activity. If so, subsidiary questions such as when newcomers are taken to the park the first time (typically summer) and what they're told about the park (wildlife experiences, other park features) could also play a role in opinions formed about the park and subsequent direct support. Among these established actions, each of the three groups had distinguishing characteristics.

### ***Acknowledged Support***

Monetary contributions, the third most utilized support behavior, was the action most specifically focused on in this study due to the nature of non-profit participants. As a standalone action, participants revealed that they utilized a wide range of monetary support actions from direct donations to credit card percentage transactions and more. This behavior was not limited to non-profit supporters, with several repeat visitors also engaging in such donations. This overlap of participant groups in types of support was a common theme and prevented the exclusion of any of the participant groups from a given support category.

Foundation donors were the most engaged of the monetary supporters, aware of the non-profit's goals and projects their money was going towards. Association members were less engaged. While most members possessed an understanding of the ways the YA used their gifts, several were unaware of exactly what the non-profit did, and knew only that it supported the park. Repeat visitors who gave money were the least engaged in this activity, with several of those who gave not remembering who or what they gave to within the park, just that they had made a donation in the past.

In terms of other direct support provided to the park, Foundation Donors were the only ones who undertook such activities as soliciting other donations and engaging in political or issue advocacy on behalf of the park. This is likely explained due to their greater awareness and interest in specific park issues, as well as the fact that several YPF participants were also current or past high level members of the non-profit, serving in various leadership capacities. In contrast, YA members and repeat visitors were more likely to participate in environmental actions that reduced visitor impacts within the park as a form of support.

Perhaps the least likely direct support action to be taken by all three participant groups was that of volunteerism. Only two supporters had volunteered with the park itself, with a few others also identifying volunteer work for the YA or YPF. Several others had considered or wanted to volunteer, but the majority of participants responded in the negative, for a variety of reason. The most common reasons for not volunteering were the joint factors of time and distance, with age being a third consideration. For those over an hour or so away, they saw the commitment as too burdensome even though they truly enjoyed Yellowstone and the opportunities it offered. These responses matched well with prior research on such subjects, suggesting that park support was no different than philanthropy at large in this regard (Choi, 2003).

### ***Unrecognized Support***

All three support groups had common tendencies in terms of type of unrecognized support. Behaviors such as sharing experiences and introducing new visitors were widely done by all participant groups. Other activities such as staying informed, being a Park Promoter, and educating others were emphasized more by specific participant groups.

Of the shared activities participated in by all three groups, a distinction can be made

between repeat visitors and non-profit donors. While all three groups equally participated in sharing experiences in Yellowstone with others and introducing newcomers to the park, the participant groups varied in who the people they shared experiences with or brought to Yellowstone were. Repeat Visitors were most likely to limit these activities to immediate and extended family, with a few exceptions for friends interested in the park. YA and YPF supporters were more inclusive, and discussed how they shared experiences with family members, friends, and even work colleagues as well as bringing these same types of people to the park.

Beyond their tendency to be more inclusive, non-profit supporters were also more likely to stay informed about park issues. YA members in particular appreciated and utilized the communications sent by the non-profit to stay connected with Yellowstone. YPF donors tended to stay informed about park issues through other non-profits they supported and did not reference YPF mailings of any kind. In contrast, repeat visitors who noted that they stayed informed with the park referenced trip planning visits to the park web site and social media to stay abreast of changing travel conditions in the park.

Those participants who discussed educating others about Yellowstone as a form of support tended to be YPF donors and repeat visitors, but more importantly were educators of some sort in their professional lives. This background was the distinguishing feature for this action, as these school and cause-related educators often noted they utilized Yellowstone topics in lesson plans to raise awareness of the park and wanted to make their students curious about the place.

The splitting of unrecognized support into direct and indirect components brings the question of efficacy in support up for discussion. Direct support such as education, political advocacy, and being environmental friendly while visiting YNP were all forms of support that

were identified by participants as having tangible outcomes, typically related to increasing knowledge or helping to preserve the park in some way. In contrast, indirect support such as staying informed and sharing experiences were rarely identified by the participant and typically arose when prompted by a question. The former action helped raise awareness of the park while the latter ensured that park visitors and supporters stay abreast of changing topics in the park and produced largely intangible outcomes such as beliefs about Yellowstone.

Examined alone, sharing experiences in Yellowstone with others was perhaps the weakest form of indirect support for the park. Sharing experiences could help alter a non-visitor or supporters beliefs about Yellowstone, but few supporters discussed such activity. However, since this behavior was almost always complimented by other direct and indirect support actions, this weakness could be offset. Additionally, the sharing of experiences presented an opportunity as a doorway form of support which other forms of support could follow through in the future (encourage visits, donations, etc.).

**R2:** *Why do Yellowstone Park Foundation donors, Yellowstone Association members, and repeat visitors support Yellowstone National Park?*

Reasons for park support primarily focused on monetary donations due to the design of the interview guide and nature of non-profit participants interviewed. Other support such as environmental, educational, and advocacy were also addressed, but in less detail than responses to monetary donations. Like types of support, one of the important ideas that emerged as a result of this study was how varied reasons of support were and how participants had multiple contributing reasons that influenced the decision to support. For example, a park visitor's awareness of need for funding, plus matching values about what is important in life, along with tangible benefits gained once support is provided can all play a role in leading the decision to provide support.

Examining reasons that emerged for all support types, the idea of a participant undertaking an action because they valued some aspect of Yellowstone was the most frequently cited reason for giving across both philanthropic and pro-environmental support actions. Philanthropically, Bekkers and Wiepking (2012) commented that, “Supporting a cause that changes the world in a desired direction is a key motive for giving that has received very little attention in the literature.” This wanting to change the world in a desired direction is perhaps the best way to think of Yellowstone monetary supporters, though ‘preserve’ might be a more apt word than that of ‘change’.

While there was some overlap between groups, the two specific valued causes cited most by non-profit supporters were those of wildlife and preservation of the park for the future while repeat visitors were more likely to be general supporters of the environment. YA and YPF supporters expressed their attachment most particularly to wildlife restoration causes. This included the wolf reintroduction program as well as the cutthroat trout restoration program, and these initiatives were often expressed as the primary reason for park support among these groups. Wolf supporters in particular often stated the fact that Yellowstone was one of the few places globally that you could watch wolves in person in their natural habitat and donated to ensure this remained possible. Those supporting the cutthroat program were similarly enthusiastic about helping reestablish a native species in its rightful environment.

Both non-profit and repeat visitors who spoke about preservation of the park for future generations commonly had family in mind when talking about the future. These groups wanted to ensure that their grandchildren and the generations that followed them would be able to visit the park and receive the same experiences that they were able to receive in their lives. A short term version of this reason was provided by those repeat visitors who discussed undertaking

environmental actions while in the park, as they wanted to ensure Yellowstone remained as pristine as possible so that they and their more immediate families could continue to enjoy the beauty of the park on future visits. Those taking environmental actions also saw these little things like picking up trash and staying on trails as part of their responsibilities while visiting the park, essentially exhibiting some ownership via responsible use.

Regardless, work by Bennett (2003) and Keyt, Yavas, and Riecken (2002) both cited the importance of such values in choosing causes to support, matching the results found in this study. In past work on pro-environmental support, Stern (2000), Kollmuss and Agyeman (2010), and Dahlstrand and Biel (2006) proposed varying models to explain why such actions were performed, and all three noted a supporters values played a role in the decision-making process, but cautioned such behaviors were complicated, and that values were only one of many underlying factors.

Examining altruism, the second most widely reported reason for support, study results again agreed with common philanthropic literature on the topic. Bekkers and Wiepking (2011), Andreoni (2006), and others focused primarily on altruism after an awareness of need was established, defining altruism as giving because donors care about a causes' output. Study results revealed a small split in altruism between those who sought to close what they saw as a gap in funding for the park, and those who wanted to help enhance services the park was already providing. The former category was the larger of the two, and also the one that reported being aware of the park's need that incited them to act altruistically in the first place. The latter is the more interesting in terms of altruism, as such giving is thought to decrease if supporters perceive that needs are being met (Andreoni, 1989).

Beyond the top two most frequently given reasons for support, other explanations for

both monetary and non-monetary types of support fell well within the mechanisms for giving used as a general guide for this study. Due to the multi-faceted and complex system uncovered for types of support, this method of organization for reasons behind support is probably a simplification of such aspects and require future study to form a more scientific model.

**R3:** *What other types of organizations or causes do Yellowstone supporters donate to and how similar or different are these to supporting a national park?*

The examination of other causes contributed to by Yellowstone supporters revealed monetary support as the most consequential way that the majority of park supporters helped other causes. Hands on work, either as a non-profit staff member or volunteer participant, was the only other type of support discussed for these other causes. This small number of actions provided to the open-ended prompt provides an interesting contrast to the wide range of direct and indirect support activities discussed for Yellowstone. It is again possible that more support actions than discussed were undertaken, but were not viewed as support by study participants.

Numerous types of non-profits were discussed when participants were asked about support, and several general categories emerged. Other environmental causes were the single largest category listed by park supporters, and suggests that those who visit Yellowstone frequently or who give money to the park could broadly be considered environmentalists, concerned about both specific places and issues in the wider world. Non-environmental causes such as educational institutions, religious organizations, human service charities, health services, and local community causes made up the other categories of causes commonly given to by park supporters. Four of these categories (religion, education, human services, and health) were among the top five types of causes given to annually as a population (Giving USA, 2015) In perspective, environmental giving is the smallest named category in the recognized list, with just three percent of all donations going towards that area in 2015. That so many park supporters also

supported other environmental causes is likely confirmation that park supporters help make up a considerable portion of giving in the environmental category.

Of the participant groups, repeat visitors distinguished themselves from the non-profit supporters due to their tendency to support only environmental causes and human service organizations. In contrast, YA and YPF donors were involved with every listed non-profit category. One explanation of this might be income levels. During the discussion of support for Yellowstone, several repeat visitors noted being unable to support the park financially due to budgetary constraints. Past research has long provided evidence that level of income and wealth is related to giving decisions (Steinberg, 1990; Auten et al, 2002), with wealthier donors giving more and those with less excess funds giving less. Context clues in interviews seemed to confirm this, with several donors describing \$1,000 donations as modest, contrasted with others who noted they give as they can afford to.

Furthermore, Bennet (2012) suggests that those donors who are less well-off tend to give primarily to human service causes, recognizing that such organizations have been helpful to them in the past, and wanting to help others recover from true poverty, not so far away from their own status. This line of argument still requires explanation of the additional environmental giving that these repeat visitors provided, which could be as simple as such donations being small amounts of money given infrequently, or more complex, such as the importance of the cause outweighing the financial benefit not donating would have.

Examining reasons given for these causes, results were very similar to those of park support, with many of the same characteristics occurring in both sections. Values, altruism, and efficacy were the largest three reasons for giving provided, and generally matched with similar explanations of park support. Supporters valued the opportunities provided by these causes, were



aware and willing to provide support, and gave to causes they thought their funds would have an effect on. A fourth primary reason for giving was that of personal connections. Personal connections were relationships supporters had with non-profits that did not fit cleanly under any of the more general categories of giving used in this study. Part awareness of need, part values, and part efficacy, this reason for giving was more about who supporters knew that had been helped by a particular cause and how that support had made a difference in their lives. This reason for giving did not show up in park support, perhaps because of the very individualistic nature of experiences in Yellowstone.

**R4:** *What are the differences and similarities in the three groups in park support rational and reasons for beginning that support?*

Though all three groups did mix frequently in both the types of support that participants performed as well as the reasons behind that support, some general trends did emerge that helped to distinguish repeat visitors from non-profit participants. Repeat visitors were the least likely to engage in acknowledged philanthropic support actions, with only four reporting making a monetary contribution to the park, while non-profit supporters were universally involved in philanthropic actions, and a number of them in multiple such actions. Additionally, while participant reasons for withholding park support were not a primary goal of this study, several explanations for this lack of monetary support emerged, primarily from repeat visitors, but also from former non-profit donors still on organizational rolls.

The most cited reason for not giving among participants was the lack of funds. A commonly known variable in philanthropic literature, if income level is lower, or is perceived to be low, than monetary donations are less likely. Additionally, a few participants reported no real interest in giving to the park, preferring to support causes they saw as more pressing. This presents a common case of competition for funding, where priorities must be defined by the

donor. A final possible cause for withholding support that was not directly cited by participants but likely exists is a potential lack of awareness. Nine of the non-profit participants in the study cited Yellowstone's need for additional outside funding as part of the reason they chose to support the park. As none of the repeat visitors identified this same awareness of need, it is possible that they might not recognize Yellowstone as not having its financial needs met.

In contrast to the lack of philanthropic support, repeat visitors were more likely to engage in a range of direct unrecognized actions, and were the group who identified actions they performed inside of the park most often. These things like cleaning up litter, recycling, and practicing LNT rules while in Yellowstone indicated that repeat visitors are not totally unaware of the impacts they have on the park, and shows that even when not donating they can provide some form of direct support to the park. A few non-profit visitors also mentioned these types of internal actions when asked about ways they supported Yellowstone.

Several other differences arose between the two non-profit groups examined in this study, largely illuminating the differences in the missions of the YA and YPF. Several of the non-profit participants in the study were joint YA and YPF supporters, giving to each cause. Of these dual-cause supporters, participants in every case provided a higher level of support to one cause and a lesser level of support to the other. Which cause received a high level of support depended on a person's reasons for supporting in the first place. Those more concerned about specific issues in the park such as species reintroduction, the wolf program, or fly-fishing tended to place the YPF as the cause more heavily supported while holding a low level membership in the YA, as they recognized it as another organization that helped the park. In contrast, those participants more concerned with education in the park were more likely to support the YA at a higher level and give a smaller contribution to the YPF.

Finally, YPF and YA donors could be considered more broadly as both philanthropists and as park supporters due to their extensive support of other non-profit causes. While all groups supported other non-profits, repeat visitors limited their support to environmental and human issue causes compared to the vast range of causes given to by the non-profit supporters. While this is again probably due in part to income, it is a distinction worth making that most of the non-profit donors are significantly better off in terms of income levels and that turning repeat visitors into non-profit donors may only be successful upon reaching a certain income level.

### **Additional Influences on Support: Positive and Negative**

In the course of interviews aimed at uncovering how and why participants supported Yellowstone, the semi-structure nature of the conversation revealed a number of other themes that park supporters brought to light. These themes were not necessarily brought up in the context of park support directly, but the subject matter, frequency of discussion, and connection of past work in topic areas related to support behaviors made them important to consider as having a possible positive or negative affect on support as a whole. The idea of place attachment occurred several times in different contexts and was the largest reoccurring theme that helped aid the park gain more support. In contrast topics such as social conditions in the park (crowding, visitor behavior, and commercialization) were the largest reoccurring theme brought up that could harm support.

The idea of place attachment as a reason for support was present both in literature for repeat visitors and pro-environmental actions, as well as both directly and indirectly in the data. Study participants from all three groups indicated being attached to Yellowstone, with several participants (after being asked about other meaningful locations they visited) answering that Yellowstone was the most meaningful of all, or irreplaceable to them. Others more indirectly

referenced this fact when discussing how Yellowstone was the only place they could participate in some activities (typically wildlife watching). Uniqueness of Yellowstone was a further belief of many park participants that further reinforces this claim, and participants frequently commented how Yellowstone had a diverse range of geology and wildlife not found anywhere else. Specific ties from place attachment to park support were not discussed when such topics arose, with the exception of a few non-profit supporters who expressed the uniqueness of the park as part of the reason for their support. However, the past work by Lokocz, Ryan and Sadler, (2011) and Chen, Wu, and Huang, (2013) indicated that place attachment was an important indicator of pro-environmental support and should be remembered as such.

Comments about crowding in Yellowstone are nothing new, but in light of another record breaking year of visitation, were worth examining in more than passing detail. Of the 13 people who talked about the subject five of them, from all three participant groups, brought it up as a matter of course in conversation about how they spent a typical day in the park or when in the year they chose to visit Yellowstone. These crowding comments specifically focused on how visitors displaced themselves both spatially and chronologically to achieve the desired solitude levels.

An additional eight participants, mostly non-profit supporters, further discussed the crowding problems in recent trips to the park when prompted at the end of the interview for any closing thoughts. These supporters expressed the fact that their trip to the park had been negatively affected by the number of people visiting, and hoped the park would take action to solve the problem. These complaints typically took the form of problems with wildlife-traffic encounters and the subsequent traffic jams that were created as a result of that problem.

Comments about crowding were directly related to experience with Yellowstone. Park supporters

who had relatively few visits to the park made fewer comments about crowding issues. In contrast, long-time visitors who had made numerous trips to the park typically spent more time on the subject. If crowding continues to be a reoccurring facet of the park experience, it may very well drive away a segment of park supporters who cannot visit during less busy times and result in a loss of that support for the park.

Remarks about visitor behavior in the park were also subdivided into two sections, personal and observed visitor behavior. All three groups of visitors had at least one participant discuss how their personal behavior in the park had changed over the visits and years. The most common behavioral change being that of behavior around wildlife and when to go see wildlife without crowds (early morning or later evenings). Additionally, several non-profit supporters discussed other visitor behaviors focused on wildlife incidents and driving behaviors. The common thread in these comments was the lack of education or appreciation for the park and its resources exhibited by these other visitors, and a few suggested that these other visitors were experiencing Yellowstone the wrong way. Similar to the crowding, some of these observed behaviors that caused traffic jams and otherwise obstructed supporters from enjoying the park as they wished could have repercussions for support. If not addressed in some way, the park could again see a migration of these aggrieved supporters away from the park and a loss of the support they provide.

A final few comments were made by non-profit supporters in regards to commercialization of the park and preventing future development. YA members in particular noted that while the buildings and commercialized areas in the park were important, they were very against any future development as it could potentially ruin the park in their opinion. Repeat visitors were quiet about such issues, and one possible explanation for the lack of concern is that

they were the group who most often reported lodging inside the park on their visits and did not perceive such development as a threat to the park. Again, too much development in the ways stated by these supporters could push them away from the park and take the support they provide with them.

## **Research Implications**

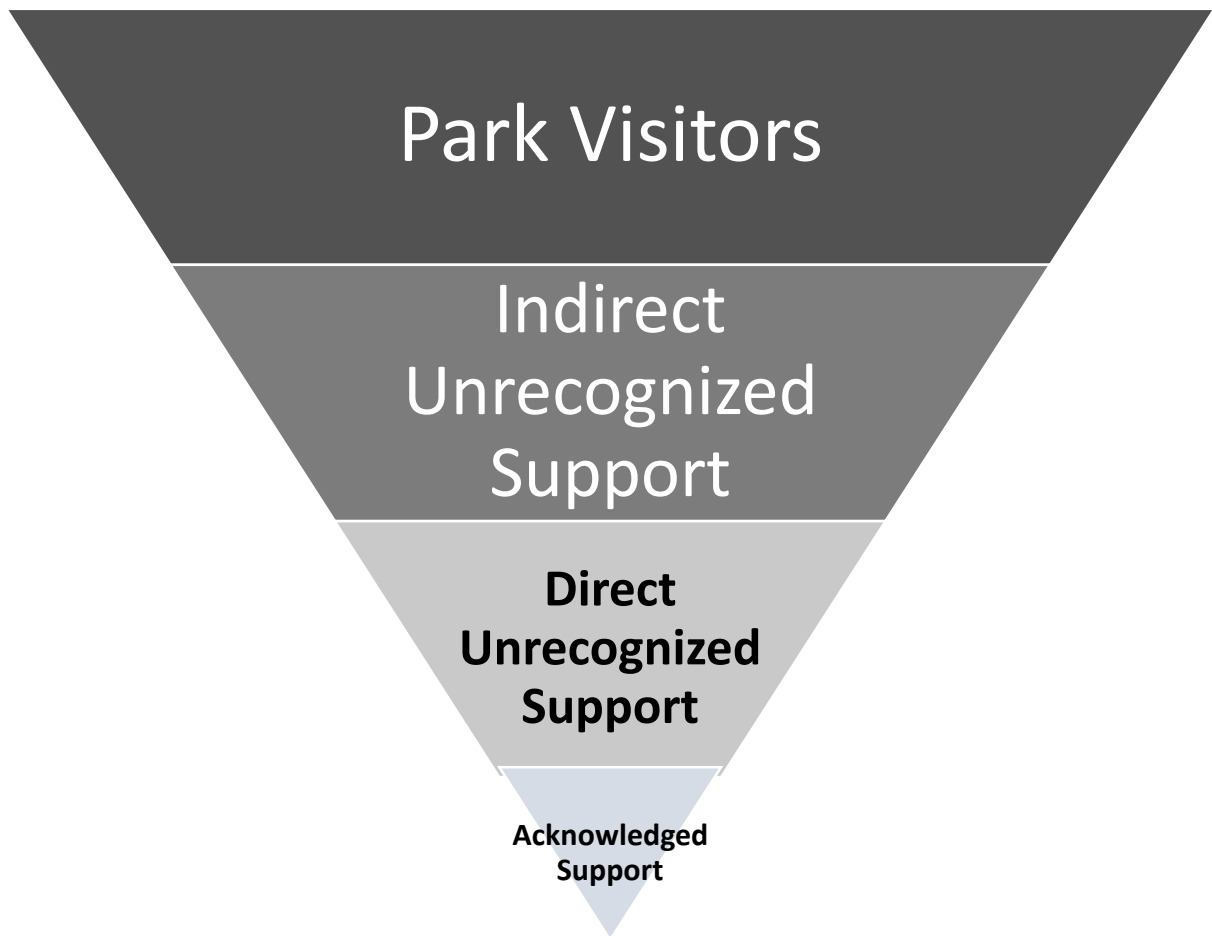
The greatest implication that has come out of this study is the idea of park support as a stand-alone subject. The results of this study show that park support is more than just donations and volunteer work, yet past literature on support for parks is limited to those few subjects (Fortwangler 2007, Vaughn 2013). While this study has identified a number of aspects that comprise and explain this more holistic idea of park support, whether it is proper to consider these aspects as a whole, or to study them separately in their pre-existing subject areas is something that needs consideration. Reflected on separately, monetary and other environmental support for parks have largely conformed to past literature on such subjects in this study. Motivations for donations all fell within the mechanisms compiled by Bekkers and Wiepking (2011, 2012) and other environmental actions largely agreed with work by Halfpenny (2010) (Stern, 2000) and others.

Development of a comprehensive understanding of park support, begun by Jorgenson and Nickerson (2014) and continued with this study will ideally lead to a model that can be applied to park systems globally at local, regional, and national scales. The continued funding threat for such areas means that the importance of public-private relationships such as these will only grow in importance in the coming years. This study has proposed a model to more accurately define park support in Figure 4, with varied types of park support all falling underneath a global definition of Pro-environmental behaviors. Furthermore, Figure 5 proposes a model of

progression for such support based on trends that emerged from the data.

All participants were park visitors who expressed indirect unrecognized support actions for the park. A smaller number of this group also reported supporting the park via direct unrecognized actions. A further subset of the direct unrecognized group comprised the acknowledged supporters who donated, volunteered, and solicited funds. The numbers along with some of the interview data suggest that park support works in a tier system, similar to a hierarchy of needs, and each prior tier of support must first be undertaken before moving on to the next. This is not to say that a first time visitor to the park cannot start doing all these things during or after their first visit, but suggests that most supporters move linearly both up and down the support tiers depending on their reasons for support and ability to give.

**Figure 5: Proposed Model of Park Support Progression**



This study also provided a starting point for understanding the reasons behind the varied support actions themselves. Primarily based in philanthropic and pro-environmental literature, Figures 1 and 2 examined the varied reasons behind participant support. The strength and importance of any given variable were not examined directly as part of this study, but a participant's personal values matching with opportunities Yellowstone provided came up most frequently. Exploring the relationship of such variables to each other as well as their influence on the decision to support will be of key importance moving forward.

### **Management Implications**

For park and non-profit supporters, one of the greatest implications that this study



highlights should be how support is not only about the money. This is not to say that donations are irrelevant, for they are critical to the idea of park support. Rather, this study suggests that monetary donations are just one piece in a much greater support scheme and that ignoring these other facets and focusing solely on monetary gifts would be a potential mistake. Not all study participants believed they had the financial capital to both support Yellowstone while maintaining their visitation pattern to the park. These non-monetary supporters form a large group which values the park and as of yet have not been fully utilized. Such supporters could hold great influence among public opinion, and could further serve to introduce additional visitors to Yellowstone who do have the potential to provide monetary support. Furthermore, these non-monetary supporters (along with monetary ones) are the leverage point for greater funding change overall either through the ballot box in both local and national elections, as well as providing continued belief in Yellowstone's greater purpose and mission. Failure to utilize these supporters as more than monetary funders could be a mistake in an era where government agencies are under ever-increasing scrutiny.

Furthermore, if the participants from this study are representative of the larger population of park supporters, then monetarily speaking it will prove a serious challenge to significantly increase the number of non-profit donors or the level of support they choose to provide. Park supporters are also philanthropists in the greater scheme, and highlighted the limited nature of donations in the giving sector, where giving more to one cause means giving less to others.

Non-profit and park managers could consider looking into some of these less traditional forms of support and find ways to utilize them on a community wide scale. For example, non-monetary support can be leveraged in the same way the current 'Find Your Park' campaign has been. A Support Your Park campaign would allow park experiences to be heard, and target one of

the greatest differences between repeat visitors and non-profit supporters, awareness of need.

This study also suggests that both non-profit participants and repeat visitors are willing to help as much as income and costs allow if given the chance and made aware of these non-monetary support actions. Programs such as ‘volunteer an hour or day’ in the park, where visitors could help with litter control, report wildlife jams, small restoration or similar projects under YA, YPF, or park supervision and be recognized for that effort by the park could make a noticeable difference in how these visitors view and interact with Yellowstone.

Examining monetary support specifically, one of the primary trends that emerged were the personal experiences of visitors. These experiences were cited as reasons for giving. Wildlife experiences and activities off the road were the moments most often cited as having led to support. If possible, managers could ensure these types of moments continue to occur. This may take the form of encouraging visitors to get off the beaten track, provide more roadway spaces for wildlife viewing in general (while ensuring traffic snarls do not form because of them) and sharing the stories of those who have already had such experiences to incite others to go and pursue their own special moments.

As a final note to park managers, the affordability of a visit to Yellowstone should be reexamined in the future and the costs of various in and near park services evaluated. Several participants contacted from non-profit partners were former rather than current supporters, and these (along with some active) participants all discussed how expensive it was to stay and eat in the park and how because of these costs had stopped overnighing and spending money in Yellowstone. One prior park supporter went so far as to cite this crowding out of the poorer park visitors as a reason she stopped supporting the park non-profits all together. While such loses are presumably made up by the increased visitation, the high cost of such opportunities may push

away lower income visitors who serve as non-philanthropic supporters.

## **Future Research**

This project and the wide range of details it has revealed about park support open up a number of avenues for future research on the subject. Perhaps the most pressing need for additional research relates to the indirect ways of support that were uncovered by this study. Support such as sharing experiences, introducing newcomers, advocating for visits to the park, and other indirect behaviors were all identified as ways of supporting Yellowstone. However, why participants saw these actions as support, and why they participated in them was not fully understood. Understanding these less conventional methods of support which are performed by a majority of supporters will be critical to both understanding park support as a holistic concept and will further help confirm or reject the idea that indirect support actions such as those above lead to more direct actions such as monetary donations or volunteering.

Additionally, while this study has identified both types of support and the reasons underlying that support, the 28 participants interviewed were able to only represent part of the greater population of park supporters. A follow-up quantitative project aimed at discovering if this researcher's findings for the examined groups are generalizable is necessary to confirm or reject these ideas and identify additional patterns or trends that might emerge.

Finally, in the course of this study, interviews with several participants brought to light groups of supporters that had not been originally considered when the project began. An interview with a YA member revealed that he was also a concessionaire employee in Yellowstone. This participant had long standing ties with the park, and cited working in the park when he was younger as pivotal in his life. A study exploring connections and support for the park among concessionaires would help reveal if his experience both with work and vacation in

the park was the exception to the rule or a common story among non-federal workers in the area. Are concessionaires there just to make money, or are they equally attached to and support the place they live and work?

Similar to work with concessionaires, talking with park and non-profit managers about support for the park would be incredibly revealing for this subject area. Understanding manager motivations for park support, and their additional thoughts on visitor support for the park would help deliver a more comprehensive picture of support from all angles and allow comparison and contrast between those helping lead the drive for support and the bulk of the supporters themselves.

Finally, one interview was conducted with a repeat visitor still in college. While common philanthropic literature and the participant's discussion both illuminated the fact that younger populations of visitors are less likely to be donors due to the lack of income traditionally found in such groups, examining those college-aged to thirty year olds in a future study would help provide insight into types of support given by visitors of that age range. Additionally, a study could also attempt to examine predictive measures both in demographic and among reasons for giving, in the attempt to see if such measures resonate with this younger group of park visitors who may become the next group of philanthropists the park is attempting to recruit.

### **Closing Remarks**

It was my intention through this study to help provide a greater understanding of what parks support is, and why visitors to a park like Yellowstone participate in such activities. In completing this study, the results have revealed a greater complexity to the types of and reasons for support than were initially presumed and has served largely as an exploratory examination of certain groups of park supporters. This study was grounded in the qualitative tradition and sought

to provide a rich description of the idea of park support among study participants. It is hoped that the information provided by participants will be utilized by both park and non-profit managers in such a way that the base of both direct and indirect support for the park can be grown through the future to better help protect Yellowstone and ensure its prosperity in future years. This exploratory study has revealed many additional areas of park support that need closer study, and it is my hope that future scholars and managers will use this work as a launching point to better understand those who support the park and realize that the park itself plays a pivotal role in ensuring its future support.

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## **Appendix A: Interview Guide**

### **Yellowstone Telephone Interview Guide**

#### **Introduction**

Script for visitors recruited at the exit gates

*“Hello, I am calling today because you recently visited Yellowstone National Park. As you may recall, you agreed to participate in a telephone interview after you completed a roadside survey. This conversation will take about 30 minutes and we will talk about your experiences in and park support for Yellowstone. Do you have time now?”*

→ If NO - interviewer will ask for a better time to call back.

→ If NO – and not at all interested, interviewer will say, *“Thank you and have a nice day.”*

→ If YES - interviewer will ask if the interview can be recorded.

*Before we begin, I would like to let you know that this survey has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget. I am also required to tell you that a Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and that you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it has a currently valid OMB control number. The control number for this collection is 1024-0224. Secondly, your participation is voluntary and your name will never be connected with your individual responses. Finally, if you have any questions about this survey, I have a name and contact number available if you would like to have it. Can we begin?*

Script for the members of Yellowstone Park Foundation and the Yellowstone Association

*“Hello, I am calling today because you were recently contacted by the Yellowstone Park Foundation [or the Yellowstone Association] and asked if you would be willing to be interviewed by a graduate student from the Univ. of MT. This conversation will take about 30 minutes and we will talk about your experiences in and park support for Yellowstone. Do you have time now?”*

→ If NO - interviewer will ask for a better time to call back.

→ If NO – and not at all interested, interviewer will say, *“Thank you and have a nice day.”*

→ If YES - interviewer will ask if the interview can be recorded.

*Before we begin, I would like to let you know that this survey has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget. I am also required to tell you that a Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and that you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it has a currently valid OMB control number. The control number for this collection is 1024-0224. Secondly, your participation is voluntary and your name will never be connected with your individual responses. Finally, if you have any*

*questions about this survey, I have a name and contact number available if you would like to have it. Can we begin?*

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### Interview Questions

The first topic I'm interested in concerns your experiences with Yellowstone in general, and the connection you have to the area.

- 1) *How many times have you been to Yellowstone during your lifetime?*
- 2) *How old were you on your first visit?*
- 3) *In the past five years, about how many times have you visited Yellowstone?*
- 4) *What is your average length of stay while visiting Yellowstone?*
- 5) *We are interested in your memories of a past experience or event at Yellowstone. Please describe the memory that first comes to mind of an experience or event at YNP?*
- 6) *During a typical visit can you describe your day in Yellowstone from the time you get up to the time you go to sleep.*
- 7) *Why is Yellowstone important to you?*
  - a) *Are there other places that hold similar meanings?*
- 8) *Why do you come to Yellowstone?*

Thank you. Next I'm interested in how you interact with the park and the area at large.

- 1) *What are some of the ways you support the park?*
  - a) *What are some of the ways you support the local communities?*

➔ If interviewee has been previously identified as a Yellowstone Association or Yellowstone Park Foundation affiliate, go to **Yellowstone Association/Yellowstone Park Foundation Section**.

➔ If interviewee has not been previously identified as an affiliate with YA or YPF, go to **Repeat Visitor Section**.

#### **Yellowstone Association/Yellowstone Park Foundation Section:**

Interviewees will be previously identified as being a member of the Yellowstone Association or contributor of the Yellowstone Park Foundation. Depending on which organization they are affiliated with, the questions will reflect their involvement with that select organization.

*As a member of the Yellowstone Association [or Park Foundation] I would like to ask you a few more questions about your affiliation with the organization.*

- 1) *How many years have you been a member of the Yellowstone Association [or Park Foundation]?*
- 2) *Can you tell me why you are a member of the Yellowstone Association [or Park Foundation]?*

- 3) *What was it that inspired you to join the Yellowstone Association [or Park Foundation]?*
- 4) *What other types of non-profit organizations have you supported in the last year?*
  - a) *Why do you support these causes?*
- 5) *Are you aware of the Yellowstone Park Foundation [Or Yellowstone Association]?*  
☐ Yes ☐ No
  - a) *Are you a supporter [ or member]?* ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Repeat Visitor Section:** (If they are a return visitor of at least 5 visits and are not a part of either the Yellowstone Association or Yellowstone Park Foundation.)

*As a repeat visitor to Yellowstone I have a few more questions for you, associated with your many visits to the park.*

- 1) *Would you mind telling me why you are a frequent visitor to Yellowstone?*
- 2) *Are there other similar areas, over three hours away from your home that you also visit frequently?*
  - a) *Where?*
  - b) *Why those places?*
- 1) *Are you aware of the Yellowstone Association?* ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2) *Are you aware of the Yellowstone Foundation?* ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Park Support Section (Asked of all interviewees at end of interview):**

- 1) Here are some additional ways people can support Yellowstone National Park. Can you please *respond with how often you do these activities? How often do you...*
- c) *Share (talk about) experiences in Yellowstone with others?*
- d) *Spend nights in lodging facilities in Yellowstone National Park?*
- e) *Spend nights in gateways communities outside of Yellowstone?*
- f) *Become a member of the Yellowstone Association?*
- g) *Donate money to other conservation organizations?*
- h) *Donate money to the Yellowstone Park Foundation?*
- i) *Bring visitors to Yellowstone who have never been before?*
- j) *Spend nights camping in Yellowstone?*
- k) *Visit Yellowstone's Facebook page?*

1)       *Volunteer time with Yellowstone National Park?*

Is there anything else about Yellowstone that you would like to share with me?  
Thank you so much for your time, and have a great day.



## **Appendix B: Longer Quotes about Supporting Other Non-Profit Causes**

When asked about support for other non-profit causes, three study participants discussed the non-monetary support they provided causes, either by volunteering or working as staff for various non-profits. These participants described their activities and connection to these non-profits at length, and as such, were a little unwieldy to include within the main text of the thesis. However, the responses are still valuable, and allow insight into why these participants put so much time and effort into three very different causes. They are presented here in full, edited slightly for clarity.

### **Non-Monetary Environmental Supporters**

**Alyssa (Repeat Visitor):** Well, let me back up and tell you, I work for the Red Wolf Coalition... I participated in a program at the International Wolf Center in Ely, Minnesota, and just went there and had one of those a-ha moments that you sometimes get in your life and realized that there was some sort of passion or calling, whatever you want to call it, and came back to North Carolina and didn't really know anything about red wolves and did some research and just found out about the Red Wolf Coalition and did some volunteer work, then I was on the board of directors, and then they had an executive director position open and asked me would I consider. I did not live here at the time. I lived about 3 hours away. I just commuted for a while and worked from home until my daughter graduated from high school. And then I've been in this position for 10 years. So I've been here permanently for 6. So that kind of started things for me.

I think it serves a purpose and I just – let me back up and just say, the fish and wildlife is responsible for the red wolf program and this program is going through an assessment right now, and I think the fish and wildlife involvement in anything in any area is going to lead to some controversy, and hopefully that controversy will not take away from what Yellowstone was first developed to be, you know, what Theodore Roosevelt hoped it would be and successors and people that go that we collectively will recognize that one voice can make a difference and you put all those voices together and we need to let the responsible people in Washington know that we care about Yellowstone National Park and that we care about the animals that call it home. We care about the rules and regulations and for those people that really want to see it preserved that they do voice that and they voice their concerns when something is going on.

We've seen here that one person can make a huge difference. We've had one landowner here that was very upset with the fish and wildlife and he has more than made a ripple in the pond, so I've learned firsthand that it is important to make your opinion known in a respectful manner. So I would say that we Americans, or anybody that goes to visit or that holds Yellowstone dear, it's important to let those responsible agencies know that we do care about what goes on and we want a say in it. We elect them, or if we didn't elect them, we elected

somebody who appointed them and I think it's time that we kind of step up and we have those rights and we need to use those rights. That's the end. You can tell I'm mired deep in all this here in North Carolina with the red wolf so our site has gone to Washington and so that's a lot of what we're doing right now is reminding politicians that we elected them and that people don't have to live here to care about what's happened to those animals. I feel the same way about Yellowstone. I don't have to live there but I certainly can care that that place is there and, you know, that funds are always allotted to make sure that it's there and available for people and so on and so forth.

I don't know how much you hear about the Mexican wolf program, but you're going to hear some of these same things that the red wolf program is facing, beginning to bleed over into the Mexican wolf program. They just made an announcement when I was there in Yellowstone, while I was up in West Yellowstone that they're no longer allowed to release adult animals into the wild and they're going to be limited on the number of puppies they can foster. So here they stopped – they haven't been releasing adult animals but they have been doing fostering, and they stopped that. So I recognize the fish and wildlife is like over and done with wolves, but they have an obligation. And I think the key with the grey wolf is, I think they should applaud themselves. They set up a recovery program and they hit those goals. I think where the disconnect came was in really making sure that the states had somewhat of a good comprehensible management plan, not like the state of Idaho that just wants to shoot them. I mean, I think it's been I think somehow the fish and wildlife should have done a better job in moving forward with the state. So that's just from an outsider's position. That's it. I'm done.

**Ian (YPF):** Well, the visitor center (I volunteer at) is a conservation educational center run by the Wildlife Commission here in North Carolina, and I have a very strong commitment to trying to develop new fly fishers especially kids and women. I also – before I move to North Carolina, I was a community-based therapist for folks with schizophrenia and after that bicycle ride across the United States and spending some time in Divide Bridge during a salmon fly hatch, I kind of caught the fly fishing bug, came back to New Hampshire at that time, saw an ad for teaching fishing for kids from the fish and game and as a community-based therapist working with folks, which is the training I had kind of decided during that three months on the bicycle to change the way I did my therapy.

So I went to the fish and game department and said I want to take this class for you to teach me how to teach people to fish but I'm going to teach folks with schizophrenia and I'm going to start fishing groups in mental health centers in New Hampshire, and that's what I did. And I found that the process and the act of fishing allowed a couple of extra communication channels to open up for folks that I was working with. And these were folks who had schizophrenia that was severe they were considered untreatable by the regular community mental health centers. So they referred them on to us for this program called Assertive Community Treatment Team, which was a small self-contained team that we could pretty much go about helping these folks in whatever seemed to work, because nothing seemed to work.

And what we found was by – when I came back from the trip, I changed my approach to

do all adventure-based outdoor and group activities and reduce the amount of individual one on one time I was spending with folks but increase the amount of time that they were in group activities. And part of the goal for folks – when you're doing this with folks with schizophrenia, they're so de-socialized that we found that this process allowed them to socialize and become more and more re-socialized. And so as far as I know, at least in 3 community mental health centers in Southern New Hampshire, that fishing is still going on. When I came down here, I ended up working for Good Will and found myself connected to the visitor center and got them started with a group of folks who are very developmentally impaired that are folks that are in the good will program. And now I am just in the process of starting to reach out to set up fishing groups for kids in the public housing authority units here in Ashville.

### **Non-Monetary Other Cause Supporter**

**Olivia (Repeat Visitor):** I became acquainted with an organization probably 20 something years ago that did work with Navajo people on the Navajo reservation, and I started volunteering a considerable amount of my time with them to go work primarily with traditional elders down there trying to help them so that they could sustain traditional ways of life and – I don't know what you know about particularly the Navajo reservation, but there's no employment down there. There's a cultural connection to stay there so a lot of people think, why don't they just leave and go get jobs – that's like so why don't you just leave your house and everything you know, and culturally they really wedded to the land.

So, anyway, there's a number of underserved people in the native communities so I started working with the elders and then I started a volunteer program where we took new shoes, like tennis shoes to school-aged kids so twice a year deliver – well, twice a year working with 12 schools – I would find out which kids really needed shoes, what size they needed, and I'd go buy those and prepare them and label them with the kid's name on them and then go down and deliver them to the kids and try them to make sure that they fit. Because a lot of kids – again, because of the poverty down there, they didn't have adequate shoes to attend school in. And then the organization, like I said, that I was with I started having some questions about how they were handling the money so then I just started doing the things on my own, and through the number of years I've been down there and the contacts I've made, I've made contacts on the Hopi reservation and on the Apache reservation and now provide food, basic essential necessities.

It sounds kind of funny, but like toilet paper. Like we don't even think about not having toilet paper, but imagine if you don't have toilet paper. It's like what do you do? And so – right now you may have heard on the news the difficulty with the water supply and the poisoning of the water down on the Navajo reservation so we're working with another organization to try to get water and do those kind of things. So that's it in a nutshell. That's like 20 some-odd years' worth in a nutshell. The same girl friend who is a big birder who I always communicate with, she and I have been very fortunate and we have a lot of friends who have been willing to fund our project, but now, like some of our projects are getting bigger and people are saying, you

know, if you want me to contribute that much money, I really need to have a tax break, and so we're in the process now of forming a nonprofit to be able to keep doing that work.

## **Appendix C: Participant Summaries**

Participant summaries were written to provide readers with short ‘snapshots’ of study participants. These snapshots allow readers to understand who a particular participant was as a whole, and helps further the understanding of the varied quotes used from any given interview. Each synopsis includes information about a participant’s activity in Yellowstone, their thoughts about the park, and the types of and reasons for supporting the park.

### **Repeat Visitors**

#### **RP Memo 1: Lily**

Lily is a ten time visitor to Yellowstone, and lives outside out of the inter-mountain west. She’s a wildlife enthusiast and photographer and structures her trip specifically to view wildlife in the park. Lily and her husband have brought their kids to the park, but not together like most families, brings one per every trip. This is because specific features and places in the park hold special memories for each child. She sees Yellowstone as important because it’s one of the few places remaining that she can visit at her own pace. Furthermore, she thinks of the park in the context of Christian creation, the variety of the landscapes, and how every lake, waterfall, and other feature can be different and beautiful. Animals, not just wildlife hold meaning for Lily and her family. Some of the other places they view as special also revolve around horseback trips and trail rides

In terms of supporting the park, Lily and her family always stay somewhere in the Yellowstone area, typically in Grand Teton. She also tells friends and extended family about the park, and actively encourages others to visit. She additionally shares experiences via pictures on Facebook and other media. Lily enjoys the connections that the park can bring about, and likes meeting both visitors and rangers and hearing their stories about Yellowstone and the wider world

Key Terms: Wildlife watcher, Photographers, Religious, Scenery, Family meanings, Indirect support

#### **RP Memo 2: Madison**

Madison is a five time visitor to Yellowstone, who has made just one visit in the last five years. She lives close enough to do primarily daytrips from her home, and has made a single trip where she stayed overnight in the park. She and her husband own a boat, and spent that one overnight trip boating and fishing on the lake. The other trips were mostly sightseeing via car, with little activity off the roads in the park. The park’s natural qualities and wildlife make it stand out as beautiful to her, and the fact that it’s relatively close to her home make it something she’s able to appreciate relatively frequently. The park is important to her because it’s the first of its kind and set a precedent all other parks followed. Additionally, she enjoys the fact that visiting

it is so convenient. Fishing is a family tradition for Madison, and is one of the common recreation activities she participates in when on vacations.

When it comes to support for Yellowstone, Madison sees herself as providing support by not abusing the park and following park rules. She supports the surrounding communities via tourist dollars on her visits, primarily buying food and gas. Madison has considered supporting the park financially, but their current income as retirees and other obligations make it impossible at the current time. It is something she would consider doing if income allowed.

Key Terms: Daytrips, Road-Based, Wildlife Watcher, Fisher, Boater, Environmental, Income Restrictions

### **RP Memo 3: Owen**

Owen is a Yellowstone visitor and enthusiast who has made 12 visits to Yellowstone in his life. A visitor of convenience, he often stops by the park for a day or two on his way to other places, and will go out of his way to stop at the park if the distance isn't too great. Longer trips are rarer in occurrence but have been made in the past. Owen (and his family) are somewhat multi-activity Yellowstone visitors, getting up early to look for wildlife, hiking, and geyser watching among other activities.

The geothermal features are what are most prominent to Owen about Yellowstone, and his interest in geysers and similar features has fueled his park trips since he first visited with his parents as a child. Yellowstone holds a wonder for Owen, and it's a place where he can come to recreate and escape the daily stresses of life. 'It's nice to know it's there.' Owen also commented how the park has a magical quality to it that most other places don't.

Owen supports Yellowstone by visiting and contributes monetarily via his entrance fees as well as by following the rules of the park. He's considered joining the park foundation, and mentioned that his daughter is really interested in wildlife, particularly wolves, and that he's considered signing her up for a Yellowstone Institute class on the subject in the future. He also mentioned how much his family likes to share Yellowstone experience with others via social media. Owen used to belong to the NPCA, enjoying the idea of a national voice being able to speak out on how the parks were being managed.

Key Terms: Geothermal, Family, Wildlife, Relaxing, Considered Donation, Scenery

### **RP Memo 4: Jacob**

Jacob is a resident of Montana who moved to the state after retiring and has been to Yellowstone a dozen times since moving to the state. An outdoorsman, Jacob is a wildlife watcher, photographer, hiker, and skier who has been to Yellowstone in all four seasons to take advantage of all the park has to offer. The geothermal features of Yellowstone are some of the most important to Jacob. He noted the thrill being on top of a volcano brings and the additional adventure and risk that is brought to mind when exploring geysers areas. Jacob is mostly a front country user, doing day hikes and ski trips before heading back to his campsite or lodging for the night.

Jacob doesn't see himself as a Yellowstone supporter specifically, but mentioned belonging to the entire NPS system as a whole and traveling to many parks. In this travel behavior, Yellowstone is one of his favorite parks. Similarly for the local communities, he spends the occasional tourist dollar for fuel but not much else due to his local status. In contrast, Jacob is a firm supporter of the Nature Conservancy and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, supporting causes he has friends at and those causes that preserve natural lands and allow recreation as their goal. He attributes this lifestyle and support due to his upbringing as a child, when he was always outside roaming around.

Jacob has a friend group of other people who've been to Yellowstone before, and shares his experiences in the park with that small friend group. Most of the people he has visited the park with have been family members, and he doesn't really see himself as having introduced anyone to the park as such.

Key terms: Conservation ethic, Wildlife experiences, Photography, Hiking, Geothermal, Risk, Adventure

#### **RP Memo 5: Hannah**

Hannah is a repeat visitor to Yellowstone with 30 or more visits to the park. She resides in one of Montana's neighboring states and has easy access to the park. A photographer and wildlife enthusiast, most of her 3-5 day trips are built around a viewing schedule that is primarily early in the morning and late in the day. While wildlife is important, Yellowstone's scenic beauty and 'difference' also plays a role in bringing her back to the park so frequently, as well as the people watching she can do. The park's diversity in wildlife and landscape, over such a 'small' area is one of the key things that makes Yellowstone an important place in Hannah's life.

When it comes to park support, Hannah recalled donating years ago to something in the park, but couldn't remember to what specifically, and further said that she doesn't typically give to conservation causes in general. She has thought about giving to the YA or YPF in recent times but wants to do it when she decides the time is right. Interestingly she has given to other park areas elsewhere. On the flip side, Hannah sees herself as actively and frequently supporting the communities around the park via lodging, shopping, and partaking in such activities as the local theatrical scene.

Hannah is a frequent sharer of Yellowstone experiences, sending pictures to friends, family, and coworkers all the time about past trips and encouraging them to visit. Aside from family, she's never brought any first timers to the park. In terms of technology and social media, she occasionally checks with the website, researching ranger programs and other activities to do if the grandkids are with her on a given trip. Hannah and her husband have also considered volunteering in the future when both are retired.

Key terms: Wildlife watching, Photography, Past donation, Diversity, Scenery, Local supporter, Experience sharing.

#### **RP Memo 6: Taylor**

Taylor is an exception to the criteria of 5 visits needed for someone to qualify as a repeat visitor, nor is she a member of the YA. However due to her 3 visits, additional Yellowstone Institute trip, and subsequent donation, she is being included under the nominal category of repeat visitor.

From Colorado, Taylor talked mostly about the winter trip she and her husband took to the park as part of the YI expedition. More generally, she comes to Yellowstone for the wildlife, and really enjoys watching the various behaviors of animals in the wild. Second to the animals would be the geothermal features of the park, like geysers and mud pots. Taylor and her husband really enjoyed the winter visit in particular due to the quiet as well as the winter viewing of geothermal features in the park. In fact, they enjoyed the trip so much they provided a donation to the YI after their trip was finished.

For all her trips, Taylor sees Yellowstone as important for a few reasons. The scale of the park and its features fascinates her. Additionally, now that she's older she has a greater appreciation of what Yellowstone is (in terms of scientific hot spots). Other special places for her are the sandstone areas in Utah like those around Moab. Taylor sees Yellowstone support as entrance fees, purchases in the bookstores and similar activities. Taylor is a member of the Rocky Mountain National Park Association, which is how they tied into the YI trip for wintertime. She did note they're very vocal in their family, encouraging those with kids to travel to the park and experience it. In terms of other non-profit support, she focused more on human cause organizations.

Key Terms: Education, Teaching, Outdoor ethic, Wildlife, Winter, Hiking, Human Causes, YI Trip, YA Donation

### **RP Memo 7: Jessica**

Jessica is a ten time visitor to Yellowstone, whose primary reason for visiting isn't the park itself but rather the annual hot rod convention right outside the park in West Yellowstone every summer. She enjoys meeting up with friends they've made at the convention over the decade of auto-trips and participates in a circuit of car shows over the summertime, with West Yellowstone being one of the major stops. In regards to the park itself, she enjoys its scenic beauty, particularly the rivers and lakes that it's possible to drive along in the park. Jessica is a road-based visitor and does not stop to participate in many non-driving activities. The wildness of Yellowstone, and watching the change over time in both scenery and location are some of the things she finds most important about the park itself.

When it comes to supporting the park, Jessica views herself as mostly a non-supporter, though she does believe in people coming to visit and experience the park. In terms of local communities, she saw herself supporting the local economy via tourist dollars in the form of lodging, food, and gas. What Jessica shares with people when talking about Yellowstone are the people she meets and becomes friends with and how beautiful the area is. They've also brought friends and family to visit from other parts of the country for the annual car show as well.

Key Terms: Hot Rod Convention, Beauty, Road-Based, Friends, Tourist dollars, Auto show



circuit.

### **RP Memo 8: Olivia**

Olivia is a frequent visitor to Yellowstone who's been to the park over 60 times. A wildlife enthusiast who enjoys the wilderness and solitude that Yellowstone has to offer, she describes her trips to Yellowstone as slower, and peaceful. She enjoys stopping at overlooks and favorite spots in the valleys to scope out those areas and see what's happening in terms of wildlife and other activity. Olivia tends to visit the northern part of the park more than the southern, wanting to avoid the crazy crowds but occasionally goes back down to Old Faithful and the surrounding basins when she's showing the park around to someone new.

With an early connection to the parks by way of her 'wild woman' grandmother, Olivia has always been around parks and natural areas and Yellowstone is one of those areas where she can get 'filled up'. Filled-up was described as being in truly peaceful areas, seeing wildlife and relaxing away from the normal stresses of life. Olivia noted that while it's always great to see animals, she can adopt the mindset that seeing wildlife doesn't really matter and still get that same filled-up-ness.

In terms of park support, Olivia noted that she always gets her annual park pass, and recalled a few other fuzzy donations in the past. Beyond that she spoke about Leave No Trace in the park, and being respectful to the wildlife and other people she interacts with in Yellowstone. When asked about community support she commented that her only real contribution was that of tourist dollars.

Olivia is a voracious sharer of park experiences and has brought 20 or so first timers to the park, a few of which have become hooked like she is. When asked why she doesn't directly donate she replied that she's starting her own non-profit for native cultures and that's where most of her funding and energy is going.

Key Terms: Wildlife, relaxed, scenic beauty, outdoorsman, preservation, gratitude, cultural non-profit.

### **RP Memo 9: Alyssa**

Alyssa has visited Yellowstone eight times in her life, and comes specifically for the wildlife opportunities the park has to offer. Involved extensively with the Red Wolf project in South Carolina, most of her trips to the park are based around wolf watching either in a work context or leisure setting. Yellowstone helps her put perspective in life and relax away from the stress of the world. She thinks the park is important as it connects people with their soul, and helps refresh those visitors. She also remarked on the park's importance for its status as a wildlife refuge, and cited the impact that its own management policies on wolves can impact her own world in South Carolina. Alyssa also enjoys visiting the mountains of the West, both in the park and outside and wants to explore more of the wilderness in Montana to continue that exploration.

As part of the Red-Wolf Coalition and helping a child through college, Alyssa explained she doesn't have the ability to monetarily support the park, but does talk about it all the time. This is both among friends (a few of whom she's brought to the park) and in her work, when she

talks about the wolf program in Yellowstone in relationship to the Red Wolves. When she visits the area, Alyssa does believe in actively buying local goods. Nearby to several wildlife refuges, she enjoys the atmosphere the areas provide (similar to Yell) and also enjoys biking those same areas to slow down, stop, and enjoy what the area has to offer.

Key terms: Wolf advocate, non-profit leader, wildlife watching, scale, buy local, educational support

### **RP Memo 10: Julia**

Julia is the youngest of all the interviewees, and is currently a college student at a university in Montana. She's been to Yellowstone over 20 times, with most of those comprising daytrips from the time she lived in Bozeman, near the park. An outdoorswoman and hunter, Julia enjoys hiking, wildlife watching, and snow shoeing when she visits the park. Having visited with both family and friends, her trips with friends are for more likely to result in getting off the road and onto various trails in and near the park. Beyond her traditional visits, Julia also discussed involvement with past research in the park, and while no longer active in that community has fond memories of that project.

Julia does see herself as Supporter of the park, but explained due to her status as a poor college student she hasn't been able to properly express that support other than by visiting the park and sharing experiences and special places in Yellowstone with others who are intending to visit the park. She does believe in supporting the local communities around Yellowstone, explaining that those who live there deserve to make a living and that she'll go out of her way to make some purchase, even if small, on a visit to the park.

Julia further discussed how she was able to support other environmental causes in small ways via purchase donations at her work and when shopping elsewhere. When talking about Yellowstone, Julia further described the park as God's Country, and discussed in depth how and why she loved the park, going into memories of past relationships and numerous happy memories the park had provided her.

Key Terms: College Student, Local, Shares Experiences, Hiker, Winter Sporters, Wildlife Watcher, Religious, Environmentalist

### **Yellowstone Association**

#### **YA Memo 1: Sophie**

Sophie is a YA supporter who visited Yellowstone once with her sisters (later in life) and several times with family as a child. Yellowstone is a special place to her because of the family connection and legacy she has with the location. Her great-grandmother and grandmother both took trips out to the park when it was still young, and she has many memories of the park when she visited as a child with various family members when younger. She sees Yellowstone as a special place beyond the family connection because of the variety of geological features, but more importantly the wide open spaces that the park provides.

Sophie has been a member of the YA for three years now, stemming from her only recent visit and only visit as an adult. Shopping in the store, her interactions with YA staff members resulted in a realization that she was taking Yellowstone as an environment for granted. She spoke further about how she felt a connection to the park, and with the vagaries of federal budgeting wanted to do what she could to keep Yellowstone open and available for everyone to enjoy, and that just maybe they'd have the same 'moment' she did and provide some support as well.

Sophie repeatedly touched on her family connection, and how the legacy she was continuing was a key reason for her involvement with the park. She wasn't willing to talk about donations at large, but did note that she had given to the GRCA Foundation recently. Lake Tahoe came up as another area that was similarly very important to her, having grown up in that area.

Key Words: Family, Legacy, Open Spaces, YA, Taking for Granted, Awareness of Need.

### **YA Interview 2: Emily**

Emily is a supporter of both the YA and YPF. She and her husband contribute a great deal of time and money to the YA, and support the YPF through the use of the YPF credit card as well as a planned legacy gift. She has worked with and volunteered for the YA several times in the past five years, and also spent several seasons volunteering with the park itself. She's visited the park over 15 times in her life, with three to five of those visits in the last five years. An avid wildlife watcher, most of her visits are centered around the valleys of Yellowstone and wolf, bear, other wildlife experiences.

Emily primarily supports the YA and sees it providing a great service to the park by way of its guided tours, less-commercialized bookstore opportunities, and the educational classes it offers. She particularly focused on the guided activities, as they offer the opportunity to learn so much more than a similar unguided visit. Leaving Yellowstone as intact as possible for the next generation is another reason for her support of both the YA and YPF, as she wants her grandchildren to be able to have the same experience in the park that she had growing up. Commercialization of the park is something that she sees as a major issue that Yellowstone is currently having to deal with, and she worries that the wilderness conditions that are vital to Yellowstone are at risk with the ever spreading wifi and cell coverage in the park. Emily further spoke about wilderness as being a religious experience, a renewing of body and soul that refreshes a person.

Key Terms: Wildlife, YA, YPF, Volunteer, Legacy, Wilderness, Park-Experiences

### **YA Memo 3: Ann**

Ann is a two time visitors to Yellowstone who is a member of the YA. On both her visits she had a local friend guiding her around the park for wildlife and scenery viewing primarily, but participated in a little of everything while in the park (hiking, fishing, etc). She visited on the shoulder seasons and discussed how she gained a lot from her local tour guide. Thinking about Yellowstone, she's grateful that someone had the mind to preserve it before commercialization hit, so that it can be treasured by those who visit.

Yellowstone is important to her as it allows her to look at life, all of ‘creation’ and put her own life in perspective. The area also lets her relive the past, and appreciate the history of the place. Ann supports the park via the YA, encourages others to visit the park, and supports the towns around Yellowstone by the tourist dollars she brings to the area. She was inspired to join the YA to help preserve the gem that is the park for years to come. She sees a lack of government support, and wants to help address that lack.

Ann also gives to a number of other causes; churches, schools, camps and firmly believes in paying forward what’s been done for her. She sees a community responsibility that in turn she’s helping pay forward. Ann and her husband, now retired, have thought about helping support Yellowstone in other ways, (like volunteering) but time and planning haven’t come together. She does talk about the park as the topic presents itself in conversation.

Key Terms: Religious, Perspective, YA, Newer Visitor, Commercialization, Wildlife, Scenery

#### **YA Memo 4: Katherine**

Katherine is a five time visitor to Yellowstone and member of the Yellowstone Association. When visiting the park, she and her husband try to cover as much ground as possible every day, watching geysers, wildlife, and learning about the park. Katherine sees Yellowstone, and all the national parks as part of what makes America unique as a country. She has a love for the parks because of the freedom they offer, the ability of choice and the fact that they belong to the people of the US. She believes in learning and visiting her ‘back yard’ before venturing further out, and she continues to learn each time she visits Yellowstone, and defines herself as a patriot.

Katherine supports the park via the YA as well as by actions like recycling, cleaning up after oneself, and similar practices. She buys everything locally when visiting Yellowstone to support local communities as has done so her entire life. Financially, she supports the YA to keep the parks open, to prevent shut-downs and similar sorts of things. Kat frequently shares experiences in Yellowstone with others, and camps most times when visiting the park.

One of the big things that sets Yellowstone apart from the others parks she visits is the diversity. Over the years, the two have given more to Yellowstone and less to other parks because of the far greater amount of things to do and see in Yellowstone. Hiking and exploring geyser boardwalks is a favorite activity of hers. Other causes given to include the United Way, supporting two friends who were scouts.

Key Works: Heritage, National Pride, Diversity, YA, Open Parks, Local Support, Environmental Actions

#### **YA Memo 5: Eric**

Eric is a hiker and wilderness enthusiast who has visited Yellowstone four times. The park is one of many that he visits as he travels in retirement, with other places like Zion being equally if not more important to him. Eric first learned about Yellowstone through books when he was in his 20s and his first visit to Mammoth entirely met his expectations. When Jan visits

the park, his goal is to get, “as lost as I can” and it is these wilderness areas that truly draw him to Yellowstone.

He supports numerous non-profits in the GYE, including the YA, the GYE, and the Teton Foundation, among others. He has several reasons for supporting these organizations. Asked particularly about the YA, he noted the information the non-profit puts out via email, annual report, and in the bookstores that keep him in touch with the area and Yellowstone. He also highlighted how it makes him feel good to give back (even in small ways) to Yellowstone and other parks that allow him to get lost in the wilderness. Other non-YNP non-profits include 20+ various park foundations, and other action-oriented organizations such as the Sierra Club, Wilderness Groups, etc. Jan’s most significant donations went to these action based groups as he is a dedicated supporter of the preservation and growth of wilderness areas in the US.

Generally speaking, he’s tended to spread out his donations (\$100 here, \$100 dollars there) to a multitude of causes that support wilderness in some way or other, rather than consolidating his giving. Jan is very anti-crowd, noting that when in Yellowstone he comes early in the season and gets off the beaten track as quick as possible.

Key Terms: Wilderness, Altruism, Information, Action-Oriented, Environmental non-profits, Crowds

### **YA Memo 6: Riley**

Riley is a current concessionaire employee in the park with a long history of work and vacation trips in Yellowstone. He and his wife first started coming to, and working in Yellowstone in the 1960s, and got married in the park during one of those summers. Yellowstone as a place is extremely important to Riley as it marked a pivotal few summers in his life as he grew up in college. He spoke extensively of the people he met and how they changed his life, usually for the better. In more current times, he and his wife have retired and wanting to do something outside of a normal retirement, started working in Yellowstone during the summers once again. On off days in the park he’ll fish, stroll the geysers with his wife, and explore places they haven’t yet visited. When not working, Riley comes to Yellowstone for its diversity, beauty, and the enrichment and different perspective it provides.

Riley supports the park in a few ways, primarily by ensuring his guests are happy and take positive memories home. He also is a member of the YA. He’s very aware that the parks are in the public sector and hopes there are a bunch of others like himself, who can’t give a lot, but are giving something, to help make up for budget shortfalls. Riley also supports a number of other nonprofits, recognizing that it’s not a perfect world, and that it’s up to those who are able to help out those who are less fortunate. In terms of support for local communities, he noted strictly economic dollars for shopping for groceries and similar items needed to live a summer in the park. Riley doesn’t do much with social media, but is fascinated with the history of the park and does quite a bit of historical research, learning about Yellowstone.

Key Terms: Concessionaire, Life events, History, YA, Budget shortfall, Perspective on life

### **YA Memo 7: Lauren**

Lauren is a long distance visitor to Yellowstone, coming from California, who has been to the park 16 times. Primarily a wildlife watcher in the park, she spends most her time in the valleys looking for wolves and bears. A photographer, her favorite targets are the wildlife of the park, with landscapes and other park features also topics of interest. She noted that Yellowstone is an important place due to the enjoyment visitors can gain from it, and helps preserve the park so that future generations can also visit.

To help preserve the park, Lauren became a member of the YA and has renewed it for the past eight years and also participates in Yellowstone Institute classes. Additionally, just last year she made a contribution to the YPF for the first time. In both these cases, she was solicited in park stores, both the YA Bookstores and the YPF Photo Shop at Old Faithful. Outside of monetary contributions, Lauren supports the local communities around the park via tourist dollars when she purchases gas, food, and other trip supplies.

Outside of the park, Lauren is a firm supporter of other environmental causes closer to her home, primarily again to preserve the planet for future generations. She has been interested in such causes for a while, and partially due to that interest, is currently studying environmental education as well as volunteering with several groups teaching various educational programs.

Key Words: Wildlife water, Photographer, YA, YPF, Environmental Supporter, Educator, Preservation

### **YA Memo 8: Joseph**

Joseph is a six time visitor to Yellowstone who is both a member of the YA and a YPF donor. His trips to the park break down into two types, photography with other professionals in the field and more family based trips to explore various areas of the park. He comes to Yellowstone because of the natural beauty and the conservation ethic at work in the park. Joseph is also a fisherman, and fly-fishing also plays a role in bringing Joe to the park.

Both a YA and YPF supporter, Joseph got involved with the YPF when the NPS first reintroduced the wolves to the park, and first contributed to that project specifically. He appreciated the transparency on how donations are used as well as the great things they do with that money. Additionally, he first got involved with the YA via solicitation in the bookstores, and explained supporting them because of the work they do with education and projects they put on for kids to ensure the next generation is enthusiastic about the park. Joseph also provides support to a number of other non-profits, mostly those he was involved with growing up or has ties with through work. He believes in supporting the community in areas that don't receive large amounts of government support, such as the arts.

Beyond monetary support, Joseph is a fairly vocal sharer of Yellowstone, talking about the park on a weekly basis, bringing new folks every other trip or two, and remains engaged with the two non-profits he helps support.

Key Terms: YA, YPF, Wolves, Photography, Fishing, Education, Natural beauty

### **YA Memo 9 Chloe**

Chloe has been to Yellowstone twice, both visits occurring in the same ‘trip’ but interspaced by another destination. The trip was a ‘just-do-it’ trip with a friend to see what family members had been talking about in terms of the West. Her trip experiences highlighted the importance of wildlife in the park along with her strong religious beliefs about creation. As a first time visitor she described seeing every animal on her bucket list, and in awe of the rarer wildlife such as wolves and moose. The trip impressed her so much that she’s planning a return trip with her immediate and extended family in the near future.

Chloe spoke a lot about falling in love with the area and wanting to help every family come have the same types of experiences that she did while in the park. These reasons along with the in-park experiences led to her purchasing a membership for the YA. She also spoke about helping Yellowstone by cleaning up trash as found and similar ideas. Chloe is extremely active in the philanthropic community, and believes like several others in the study that paying ‘it’ forward is important.

Key Terms: Christian, Wildlife, Natural beauty, Creation, Family, Paying it forward, Research

### **YA Memo 10: Matt**

Matt is a frequent visitor to Yellowstone, coming six to eight times in a year to the area from Utah. A photographer, he comes to the park to capture both the scenic beauty and the wildlife he’d be unable to shoot anywhere else. Yellowstone is one of his favorite places to visit, and most of his free weekends and such are dedicated to the park. Matt will also fish near the park on occasion, but thinks the fees are a little high for in-park fishing. He has two different trip profiles, one when visiting solo for photography when he’s up early and in the park all day, the other when visiting with wife and friends which is a more relaxed trip that starts later in the day.

Matt noted his YA membership as the only way that he sees himself as supporting the park, though he does many other things such as buy locally on occasion, bring first time visitors, and more. In regards to the YA, he supports the cause due to the educational work the group does in regards to its Institute classes seeing it as worthwhile though he’s never actually attended a class. Matt shows something of a land ethic, or perhaps awareness in his donations, supporting wildlife causes such as a wild horse preservation fund. His primary concern are in giving is the wildlife, as exhibited by his comments on wild horses competing with domestic sheep for resources on BLM land.

Matt’s also very aware of the challenges the park is facing in terms of traffic in recent years. He believes the NPS needs to find a way to stop traffic jams from starting, via signage or some other way. One of his passing suggestions beyond signs was to look at limiting numbers of people in the park.

Key Terms: Wildlife, Photographer, Fisherman, YA, Institute classes, Traffic, New visitors, Hiking

## **Yellowstone Park Foundation**

### **YPF Memo 1: Ryan**

Ryan is a longstanding member of both the YPF and YA, and is an active volunteer for the YPF. He has extensive connections to the park, including friendships with a number of park staff for numerous decades and has visited the park over 50 times. Yellowstone is important to him for three main reasons, its history and what the park stands for (America's Best Idea), the diversity of park features, and the many friends in and around the park he's made from his visits to the area.

Ryan supports the park financially through the YA and YPF, by bringing new visitors on his occasional visits, and through institute classes. Contrasting this, the interviewee does not see himself as supporting the Gateway communities.

One of Ryan's main reasons for supporting the YA are the association's bookstores and the educational classes they provide. He saw the history of the park (and its non-profits) as important stories that are being lost, and commented that the YA is an important effort to ensure that these histories are told to future generations.

Reasons for supporting the YPF included both monetary and political reasons. The interviewee cited the need for the park to have an advocate in the political sphere (Washington D.C. and Congress) as well as an organization to raise funds for projects that the park wasn't able to.

Key Terms: Volunteer, History, Education, Political Influence, Financial Support

### **YPF Memo 2: Fred and Kellie**

Fred and Kellie are a couple who are both donors to the YPF and members of the YA. The two are frequent visitors to Yellowstone, having first visited when children. When they visit they do so long-term, staying several weeks to a month at a time, typically in the off-seasons to avoid the crowds. Their typical visit keeps them up in the northern areas of the park, primarily in the Lamar area to fulfill their primary interest of wildlife watching. Wolf watching comprised their most frequent activity while in the, and was also the primary reason for their first donations to the YPF. They chose the YPF specifically because they could direct where their funds went (project based funding).

The couple started their donations to YPF back in 2002, and through wolf-watching donations and interaction with Rick McIntyre eventually got in touch with another woman who invited Kellie to volunteer with the YPF. Outside of Yellowstone, the two are extensively involved in philanthropy both in the park and elsewhere, supporting faith-based causes, several collegiate institutions (where relatives attend) and cultural and economic support groups in their local communities.

Additionally, while the two do give to the YA, they are not deeply involved with the non-profit, supporting the YA solely for the discount membership provides in YA bookstores and



other park shopping opportunities.

Key Terms: Wildlife, Wolves, YPF, YA, Volunteer, Philanthropist, Long-term visitors

### **YPF Memo 3: Steven**

Steven is a high level donor of the YPF and also a direct project donor, supporting the wolf project fund specifically. He's been to Yellowstone a numerous times and makes an almost annual trip to watch wolves in the park with his wife. He's a former NPS seasonal, and a supporter of numerous environmental causes. He became involved with Yellowstone support incrementally, first taking classes from the YA over several years, and having a close personal encounter with wolves during a collaring operation one visit. This personal up-close experience was the catalyst for his extensive donations over the years.

He supports both the park non-profits, but contributes much less to the YA when compared to the thousands of dollars given to the YPF. In terms of community support, he noted tourist dollars spent in lodging, food as the only real way he gives to the community. Examining other non-profit causes, Steven is very active in his support of other environmental causes, having gone so far as to speak to political bodies and at events in support of projects.

Steven has a very strong conservation ethic that was instilled in him by his parents growing up through extensive outdoor travels, including numerous park visits as a child. Steven is deeply connected to the wolf project in Yellowstone, having sponsored a number of wolves throughout his lifetime, as well as being very aware of wolf activity around the country. Supporting the wolf revival is one of his major life goals, and something he finds great emotional benefit in.

Key Terms: Wildlife, Wolves, YPF, YA, Environmentalist, NPS Employee, High Level

### **YPF Memo 4: Robert**

Robert is a frequent visitor to Yellowstone, with well over a hundred visits to the park from Big Sky. A relative local, he takes shorter trips to the park to pursue his passion of fly-fishing. A fisherman first and foremost, Robert's trips are structured around that activity, with wildlife and sightseeing two secondary activities he engages in when not on the river. Yellowstone is important to him due to the preservation of the place, particularly of habitat (aquatic as well as other) and since he grew up in the area, much of the country surrounding Yellowstone also holds similar meaning to him.

Robert supports the park by sharing experiences with others, typically fishing tales, and has brought more than a few first time visitors to Yellowstone. Financially he supports the YPF, an organization he believes that is doing a great deal of 'good' work for the park to help compensate for the lack of tax dollars from the government. Robert's primary motives for giving are to help the cutthroat restoration in the park, and he directs most of his funds to that cause. He's inspired to do this as a result of his long relationship with the park, having watched native cutthroat decline over the years, and return in more recent times.

Fishery and aquatic causes are one of his primary philanthropic drives, and beyond the YPF he also gives to several other aquatic based nonprofits. A long time visitor to the park, he noted the importance of sustaining Yellowstone as a national resource, and that the locals who live around the park and visit just for enjoyment and pleasure rather than work could be better mobilized by the park and it's 'friends'.

Key Terms: YPF, Fishing, Species Restoration, Wildlife, Local Resident, Introduces Newcomers

#### **YPF Memo 5: Eric**

Eric is a new resident of Montana who's been to Yellowstone over 20 times. Living in Bozeman, most of his trips to the park have been daytrips, starting early in the morning and ending late back at home that night. When visiting the park, Eric is primarily a fisherman and wildlife watcher, and really enjoys that all you have to do to get away from the crowds in the park is to get off the road. Eric sees Yellowstone as a home, and an incredible place to be in regards to the natural beauty and geologic features of the park. He enjoys the ability to always go new places in the park and surrounding areas and see something different.

Primarily due to these aspects of Yellowstone, Eric has put the YPF in his will, to help financially after he and his wife pass away. They've made that decision as the park has enriched their lives and wanted to give back to the place that means so much to them. In addition, Eric often talks, emails, and shares his experiences in the parks with friends back East frequently. He's also brought a number of first time visitors to the park, even neighbors in Bozeman who haven't visited before. One of his major concerns in regards to Yellowstone is that it resists any urge to become an amusement park, to protect the wildlife in the park and help out staff.

Key Terms: Fisherman, Wildlife watcher, YPF, Will, Local, Home, Daytrips, Enriching

#### **YPF Memo 6: Connor**

Connor has visited Yellowstone six times in years past, but has not visited in the last five years or so. He comes to Yellowstone for the power of the place, the scenic features, geothermal areas, and the wildlife that the park has to offer. One of the things he most enjoys about visiting Yellowstone are the experiences he was able to have with his family watching geysers and wildlife. Most of his trips were two to four day events, each day planned the morning of. Most of his activities in Yellowstone were road-based, and he and his family would stay at a lodge and daytrip to various areas of the park.

In terms of park support, Connor and his family talk about Yellowstone with family and friends, and also had contributed annually to the YPF for 10 years before discontinuing the practice due to financial concerns. Community support once again took the form of tourist dollars, eating and buying fuel locally, while staying within the park itself. Connor supported the YPF because he saw their mission a simple, nonthreatening, and 'good', without any hidden agendas.

He also gives to a number of other groups, the nature conservancy among them. Talking about the BC, he noted how such groups help restore habitat, and restore some of the natural

cycle that should be in an ecosystem. In closing, Connor noted that Yellowstone is a place where he could recharge his batteries, but in a different way, than a 'normal' vacation. Yellowstone makes him realize how big nature can be, and that scale makes all the difference.

Key terms: Family, Wildlife, Power, YPF, Restoration, Former Supporter, Family, Environmental Supporter

### **YPF Memo 7 Ian**

Ian is a YPF supporter who has been to Yellowstone five times and lives across the country on the East Coast. He is predominantly a fly-fisherman, and much of his life revolves around that sport and its varying applications for various populations (those with mental illness, kids, and minorities). He's used and experienced the sport in a variety of ways and is passionately devoted to supporting it, doing so through varying nonprofits, including the YPF. He enjoys coming back time after time to fish in Yellowstone to find things he hasn't seen before in the park, and noted several wildlife experiences as examples. Ian described himself as having love for the park, seeing it as unique on the planet.

In regards to park support, he's a regular YPF donor and targets his donations to the Lake Trout removal project and cutthroat restoration efforts. He talks about fishing in the park constantly with anyone who will listen, and has brought a few first time visitors to the park. Some of these have equally fallen in love with it while others have not. Ian also supports the park politically, writing letters on various issues to both the park service and the government. These actions were related to park regulations rather than park preservation or conservation.

Key Terms: YPF, Fisherman, Wildlife watcher, Park advocate, Philanthropist, Therapy,

### **YPF Memo 8 Amy**

Amy is a yearly repeat visitor to Yellowstone who's made over 30 trips to the park. From rural Appalachia, she used to live in Wyoming, and was a frequent camper until she moved further away and got older, now preferring cabins as she can't get her old camper van out to the park anymore. She comes to Yellowstone to relax, and explained that the park allows her to unwind and slow down both physically and mentally.

The park is furthermore an important place for her as it provides a safe and easy system to explore, she gets to meet people from all over, and has good memories about visiting the park with her kids. The relaxing atmosphere of Lake Hotel holds a special place for Amy in particular. Hiking, photography, and wildlife watching are all elements that keep bringing her back to Yellowstone.

In terms of support Amy encourages others to visit the park, tries to minimize her impact on the land when she visits, and used to support the YPF. A three year donor to the YPF, she's stopped giving to it because she sees the park becoming more and more inaccessible to those who aren't rich visitors. A professor, Amy supports several other causes, KIVA being the one she's most passionate about. A small loan donor program, she enjoys seeing the visible impact such giving has, and the educational aspects she can use to work it into her classroom. One of the

defining themes Amy kept returning to was the trend of the expensive (lodging, etc) crowding out the inexpensive and how everyone who wanted to visit might not be able.

Key Terms: Old Faithful, Hiking, YPF, Rich Privilege, Impactful Donations, Family, Relaxing